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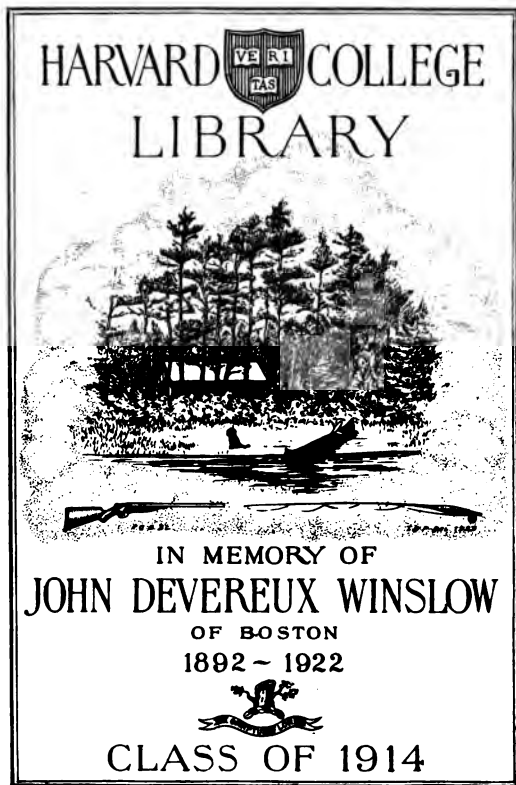
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THE HEART OF MCNADMOV
BY
ELIZABETH WESTON TIMLOW

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AT THE TURN OF THE ROAD THE MOUNTAIN LOOMS ABOVE

THE HEART OF MONADNOCK

BY

ELIZABETH WESTON TIMLOW,
Author of "A Nest of Girls," etc.

Illustrated from Photographs by
HERBERT W. GLEASON

*"These gray crags
Not on gray crags are hung,
But beads as on a rosary
In prayer and music strung."
"Monadnock."*

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

BOSTON
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1922

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Winston Churchill

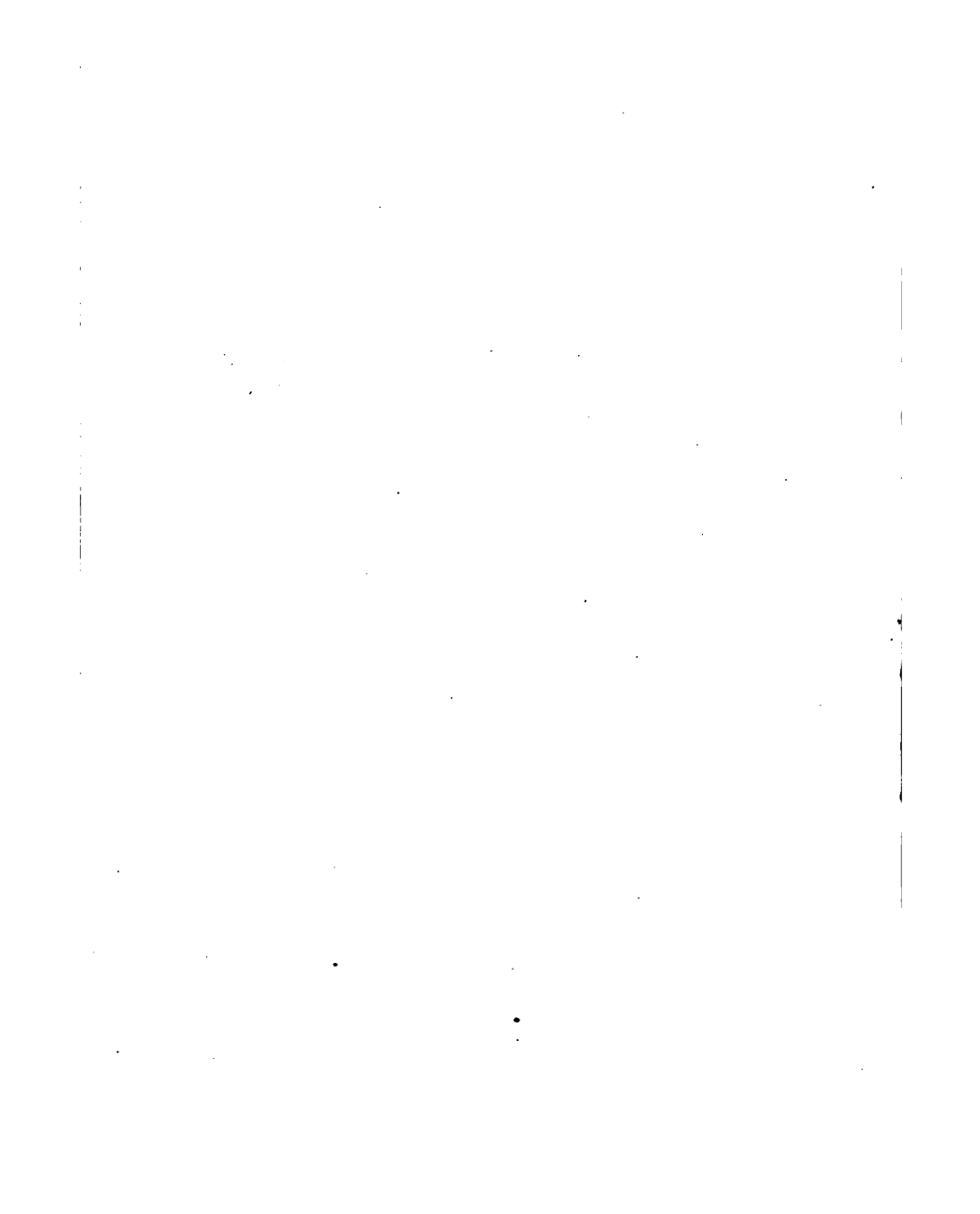
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*To
Scott A. Smith
and to the memory of
George H. Noble,
whose untiring and loving efforts
especially helped to open Monadnock
to its lovers
this little book is
affectionately dedicated by one who
feels deeply in their debt.*



THE HEART OF MONADNOCK

I

**“MONADNOCK, lifting from his night of
pines,**

“His rosy forehead to the evening star.”

Monadnock! Stately mountain, solitary sentinel of haunting beauty and intimate and irresistible allurements! Mountain loved of poets and artists; mountain which knew and loved in return the footsteps of Emerson and Thoreau and Thayer.

A strangely individual mass it is in its calm isolation, dominating subtly the entire countryside. It does not rise to great heights as mountains do, but so bold is its long couchant outline, so stern is its splendid solitude, so imposing is its brooding strength that a grandeur lies upon it that many a mightier mountain lacks.

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Hugely massed to draw the clouds, shaped through the deliberate roll of bewildering centuries, by hammer soft as snow flakes fall, it draws at last the heart from the bosom of its lovers.

“Oh, wise man! hearest thou half it tells?”

High above tree-line it lifts its mighty ridges, now blue, now gray, now darkly purple, now rose-flushed and amethyst and malachite. From the bold peak five vast shoulders, clearly defined, fall away in different directions, and stretching between them are wide, greenclad hollows, sometimes sharp and precipitous, sometimes shallow and broad. These rough, wild shoulders descend, now in stately ledges, now in sheer precipices, till their jagged outlines are lost in the thick mat of spruce which overspreads the steep sides. These undaunted little trees, gnarled and dwarfed by the fierce winter winds and biting New England tempests, cling stoutly with passionate devotion to the mother-rock, send-

ing their tough roots along the surface of the resisting granite, and pouring the smaller rootlets like molten metal into every crack and cranny. Further down the slopes their hard, cold emerald melts into sunny, mellow green of the maples and birches and poplars that flaunt their gay skirts around the mountain's base, like living flounces.

A hundred years ago, or more, report says, these craggy and almost inaccessible ravines, as they were then, were lairs of wild wolf-packs whose prowlings played havoc with the woolly flocks far below. The desperate farmers at last combined to make an end of these trackless, inaccessible lurking grounds and they set fire to the whole vast triangle. A Titanic conflagration! But out of this fierce battle-ground of flame and rock and crouching, murderous tangle, came at last with the healing years, to the vision of mankind, the rocky, tree-

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less heights, with the serene grandeur that is now Monadnock.

How the poets have loved this mountain! How their genius has lifted it to such a position as Mt. Soracte held of old in the heart of the early Romans! Into his haunting epic on Monadnock, the gentle Sage of New England crystallized his profound love for the inscrutable, Sphinx-like Spirit of the mountain—"Well-known, but loving not a name." Eagerly the lonely soul of Thoreau followed the "Climbing Oreads to their arcades." On the hearts of Longfellow, Whittier, Channing, a host of kindred minds, the magnetic touch of the mountain fell and held them in its spell.

"Monadnock, Wise Old Giant, busy with his 'sky affairs,' who makes us sane and sober and free from little things, if we trust him,—this Monadnock came to mean everything in the world that is helping and healing and full of quiet. He never failed us."

Thus came English Kipling under the mystic spell, in his Vermont home, whence

he watched day by day, with growing devotion the silent Titan, resting against the distant New Hampshire horizon.

The Wise Old Giant! To all who listen he speaks a varying tongue. Those who have ears may hear him. "Oh, Wise Man! hearest thou the least part?"

There are many approaches to the heart of this Monadnock. Those who climb the rough main trail, merely to look from the peak, do not grasp even the fringe of its mysteries. Even to the dwellers on the spreading plains below, though it may be to them a vision of artistic delight, or as it was to Kipling, a mute Teacher, even to these, manifold as may be the many lessons the granite pile may offer them, but a tithe of its joy is known. They may know and love its ever-changing color and line and beauty; they may delight in its retreat and approach with the shifting whim of the atmosphere; they may see it now in the austere purity

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and remoteness of its winter garment of ice and snow, sparkling like a million diamonds, or now impalpable, mysterious, dimly vast in a shroud of cloud, — but they may not, cannot, understand what it grows to mean to the mountain lover who dwells close to its shrine and knows it as a lover knows the heart of his mistress. Not only to look out from it, but to look deeply into it, gives us the inexhaustible lore that is hidden in the mountain's mighty heart.

All through the sweeping forests that clothe the climbing, precipitous mountain sides, are innumerable woodland trails sometimes clearly defined, sometimes merely blazed and often almost invisible save to the trained eye; up on the bare, wide cliffs above the tree-line the directions are only marked by tiny cairns—two or three stones placed one on the other. It is not hard for the inexpert to lose his way. Miles of these sun-flecked narrow paths thread through deep, quiet forests, broken constantly by the out-cropping crags, showing

how slight is the covering that mother-earth has drawn over the bed-rock; lines of miniature cairns beckon along the calm and sunny cliffs; countless mossy nooks sheltered by overhanging rock and huge tree sentinels invite the loiterer to rest; up above in the sunshine, hundreds of stone-wrought couches upholstered with gray-green moss allure one. Up here one can gaze his fill at the grave, brooding Titan reigning supreme, outlined against the ultramarine sky, giving his majestic salutation alike to distant sea and to encircling plain.

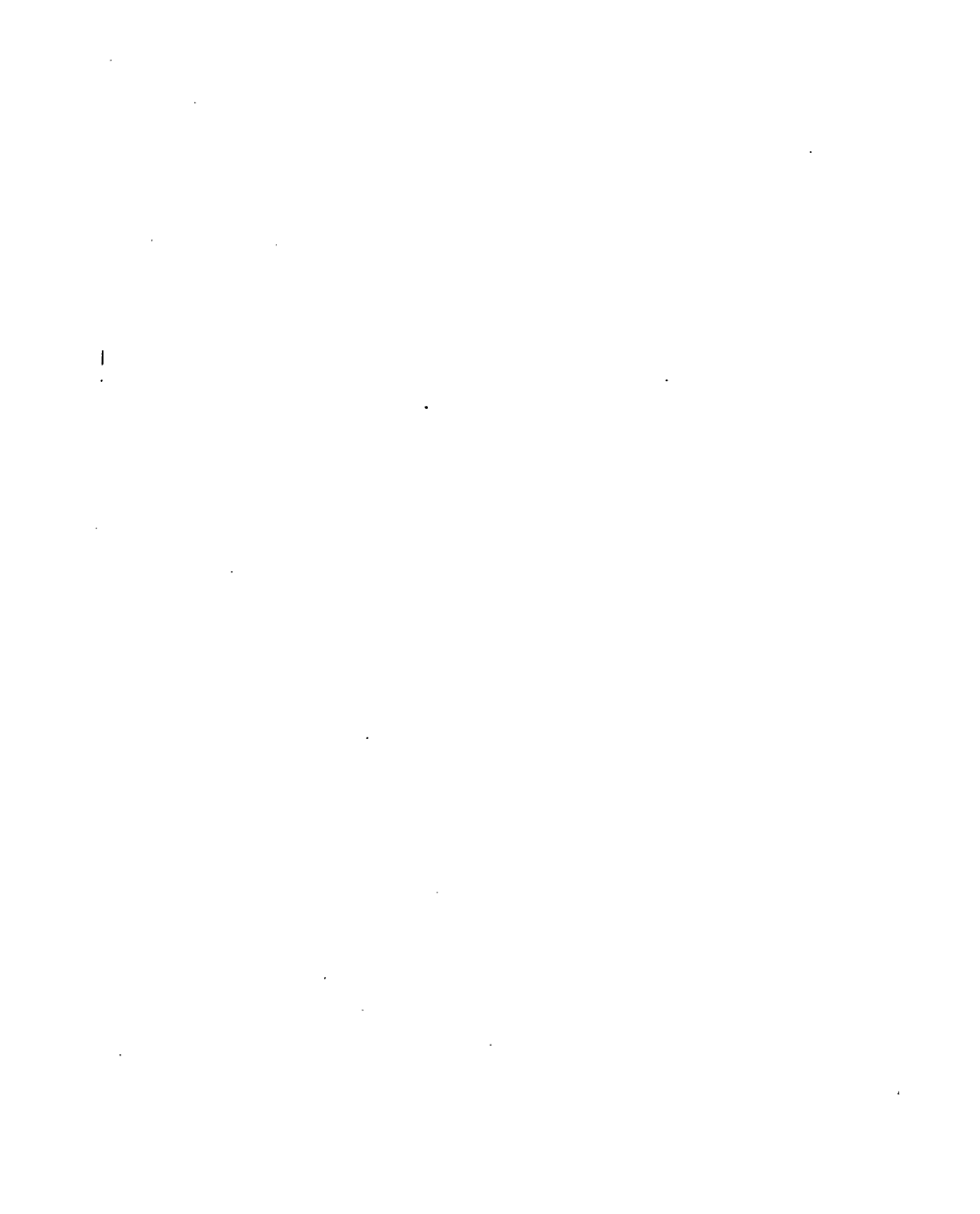
Mute at first may be the Mountain Spirit. It has no words for the vagrant soul whose ears are plugged with earthly things. But to the weary heart which throws itself into those tender arms; to the inquiring and the puzzled; to the wistful and the sorrowful; to the eager and searching; and above all to the passionately loving,—to all such, and soon, “Speaking or mute its silence hath a tongue.” To the mountain-lover the mystic spirit comes like an invisible presence,

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keenly felt, and whispers to his soul thoughts that linger and uplift and help and heal. Mute Orator!

But the greatest of these messages thus breathed into the inner soul remain forever unrepeatable. They transcend language. They come to the ears of the heart; they bring mysteriously their hidden meaning; they sink into unfathomed depths; one is transformed by them; yet their spiritual meaning may not be transmuted into the tongues of men. One hears, one knows, one believes; one may be profoundly and fundamentally changed by this strange alchemy of voiceless words. But vainly against the bonds which have set each human soul a solitary atom in a vast world of whirling atoms immeasurable distances apart, vainly against these bonds do we struggle for speech. Only the lesser things may be told.

Tucked high on a small shoulder of the western side of Monadnock, cuddling back





ENFOLDED IS THIS QUAIN HOSTELRY BY LOVING MOUNTAIN-ARMS

against the irregular cliffs that rise behind it, the straggling little mountain-house suns itself, sheltering season by season, the lovers of Monadnock. From this tiny plateau start nearly all the trails that wind up through forest and ravine. Closely enfolded is this quaint hostelry by loving mountain-arms of descending green which enfold it as the slopes decline gently to the south and west, so that the setting of the house resembles a wide green harbor.

Up the road leading from the main thoroughfare which is more than a mile and a half away, come the casual visitors day by day; those who will scramble up the mountain by the main trail, rejoicing if they accomplish the ascent in record-time. But record-time and the Mountain Spirit have no common denominator. For most of these scrambling tourists the mountain is but a rough mass to be surmounted; stony paths to be trodden upon; a peak to be looked off from; a plateau to be eaten upon; crags to be descended from. But among

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these now and then are those who even if they come but for the single trip, would fain listen and look and who catch dim glimpses of a mystic world just out of sight. For these the mountain has its own whispered word; a revival of the heart; a scarcely understood, elusive something that lives like a clearly etched memory, with almost a wonder at its vividness.

But only to those who linger here week by week and year by year, held by the growing and enchanting spell of the Wise Old Giant is given the Open Sesame to his garnered wisdom and strength. But one may stay at the little hostelry for many weeks and not be able to explore every threadlike path with all the twisting links and visit every nook he loves; for when the fall day comes when he must sighingly descend to ordinary life again, something has always been left to next year.

But through the winter days that follow, there remains within the heart, all through the swirl of city life, with its hammering

claims and its tangled experiences and its smiting sorrows, an inner shrine—a sort of Sabbath of the soul, whither the mountain-lover may retreat as to an unsailable refuge. The wild clamor of the world, it is true, may shut out for weeks at a time the memory of that peaceful altar; his tired ears may become sealed to the echo of that mystic voice that brought to him marvellous things; and then suddenly almost without volition on his part, in some desperate moment he finds himself once more encompassed by the strange peace of that inner sanctuary. Again he learns that the strength of the mountain is indeed part of his very soul; that the whispers of the Wise Old Giant were no dream but a divine reality.

II

But "If winter comes shall spring be far behind?" Up there in the north, on those frozen crags and ridges the magic chemistry of nature is at work, "thawing snow flakes into flowers," while in the southern home of the Mountain-Lover the crocuses and tulips and the pansies break like flame. April. May. Then the time for the mountain comes at last. Out of the heat of southern June its lover returns to his own.

Breathless he drinks in again the air of crystal limpidness; breathless he gazes with rapture at the unchanged cliffs awaiting him, lifting their serene fronts clad in purplish-gray from the surrounding sea of gay spring green. With bared head he stands in

their presence. "Ages are thy days, thou type of permanence!" It is all a reality—and not a dream.

Half intoxicated with pleasure, he flings himself on the needle-strewn ground burying his face in its crisp brown fragrance. He stoops to lay a caressing hand on the broad, four-leaved white flowers of the bunchberries which carpet sunny open glades. Almost in a single thought he takes in all the coming delights. He knows that far up above, his foot will soon fall with light and loving pressure on the tiny, shiny leaves of the sturdy little mountain cranberry, lining smooth little hollows and creeping up to the foot of towering rocks, their brave little rosy-white blossoms telling cheerfully of the snow drifts beneath which they have lain warm and snug all the long stern winter that has just past. And he knows that high up in the little caves opening to the northeast there still lurk lingeringly some drifts of icy snow sullenly yielding to the high-wheeling chariot of

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Phoebus. And he remembers also the endless, crowding ranks of blueberry bushes mantling all the spaces between the rocks up in the sunlight, with their close-set rose-touched clustering blossoms, promises of the pinky-blue succulence to come. Sheep-laurel is lending its magenta to the color scheme. The shad-tree still whitens the upper forests, though on the plains below, its white petals would long since have fallen.

The limpid springs, full to the lip, lie in every rocky hollow, clearer than amber; gay little giggling brooklets are whisking along tiny rocky channels, babbling little mountain secrets as they flirt with their banks. He could hear them. Then growing broader and more opulent and more occupied with their own affairs, they come tumbling down in miniature cataracts, spreading out here and there into broad pools to rest while they collect their forces for another mad excited little plunge. . . . And there is moss everywhere of every shade of melting green, cushioning rock and

stone and bank. The spruces are decorated with their yellowish-green tassels. The cool and exquisite chrysoprase-green of unfolding ferns embroider the woods. Gay bird notes still fill the air. Beauty, virescent, eager, beckoning, sparkling, intoxicates the senses.


Every path beckons. Shall he go first on the well-worn trail to Point Surprise just to make perfectly sure that every dear stone is still out-cropping in the same place? Humming in unmusical tenor, just in the sheer joy of living, the Mountain-Lover springs up the rocky staircase upwards to the right. First he must swerve to see if the Iron Spring is functioning properly. Yes, the spring is as active as ever. Up the rising ascent obliquely to the ridge he goes until the path turns sharply to the east where rising in front of one is seen a break in the trees and a wall of rock against the sky line. One quickly over-tops this and

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as the head comes above the line, it is Point Surprise indeed for a new comer, for he is on the edge of an unexpected precipice which defines the long length of the Pulpit Rock shoulder. Below is a sheer drop, broken as it descends by irregular, spruce-covered ledges. Here one looks off into misty distance towards the east, across a softly undulating landscape, over shimmering lakes and receding hills, blurred against the horizon line,—bathed at this hour of the late afternoon in dreamy ethereal blue. Here and there appears a white and slender spire; roofs of outlying farmhouses and scattered villages break through the thick greens; ribbon-like roads wind across the valleys. Tender, peaceful, serene.

The climber drinks in all the familiar beauty with avid delight; with the sun at his back the colors have marvellous values. He pats the worn rock with affection—even though this spot is far too popular ever to detain him long. He looks to right and left. Shall he go down to the right towards the

Matterhorn and Hello Rock and pursue the fascinating tangle of paths that thread the lower reaches of the precipice? Or shall he, today, keep to the left along the Cliff Walk, towards Emerson Seat and Thoreau Rock? He chooses the upland trail, and takes his rejoicing steps slowly, lingeringly, in sheer abandonment of pleasure, along the cliff, where for a long distance the trail creeps saunteringly close to the edge of the green gulf. With every northward step and turn of the cliff the landscape changes. New lakes gleam out; new horizon lines of rippling ranges flow to the northeast, towards Peterboro', sleeping in its quiet valley. Peterboro', whose prosaic name is musical with the rhythm given by the Master, whose genius found its home there. Here and there the climber pauses to look from the intimate detail of beauty on the left hand, in the ridge itself, where the trees in their sunny spring garments cling close to romantic gray walls of rock, and where sequestered nooks appeal, carpeted luxuriously with



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moss, back to the flowing, misty beauty far below him.

He comes to the point where the Cliff-path crosses the Thoreau trail which leads up from the house on the other or west side of the ridge. High in front looms the brown mass known as Emerson Seat and just below it the other which is called Thoreau Rock. He could turn across here and he would drop down to the house in ten minutes for all this previous sauntering has been like taking the two long sides of a very acute-angled triangle. But though it is getting towards supper time and an unromantic mountain appetite assails him, he is not quite ready to turn back yet. He takes the Thoreau trail for a short distance across the valley of the ridge, then turns sharply to his right and up the little crevasse in the steep, bald rock; across this he goes and into the woods at the Chipmunk-trail—but not along its whole distance which would lead him too far this evening. Instead he scambles down the swift descent



THOREAU'S SEAT



known—and not euphemistically—as Do-Drop-Down, which leads him through deep woods to the house . . . But there will be tomorrow and another after that. Weeks of tomorrows!

The Mountain-Lover each year renews his acquaintance with his mountain by lingering degrees; like a lover coquetting with his mistress he dallies over its approaches, taking now this side, now that, seeking out favorite haunts, smiling happily, and content to be smiled on without words at first, as he alternately draws nearer and recedes. The love, the whispered confidence, the delight in nearness all await him, but like an epicure, he at first just sips his pleasure. These early days are like the bouquet on wine.

All last night there was a deluge of June rain; one thunder storm after another. This

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morning the brooks will be in their glory, and today therefore, the way must be to the west. Beyond the old barn and under arcading trees threads a tiny path leading to all the trails on Monte Rosa, and this the saunterer takes till he comes to the path that skirts the spur and leads him to Monte Rosa brook. Long before he comes in sight of it he hears its miniature thunder and he plunges down the last sharp little descent as eagerly as if he had never seen tremendous mountain cataracts on mighty ranges. The beloved little brook is tearing along joyously, full from bank to bank; the mossy stepping-stones are submerged and their tops show green and shining below the water. Down the bank the loving explorer takes his slow way stopping every few moments to delight over some slight turn of the baby-cataract as it flings itself petulantly down some great descent of some ten feet or so in mimic fury, then as if laughing softly to itself like a mischievous child it extends its arms gaily to mossy banks on

each side of the wider bed in which it now finds itself.

Witching Undines throng here; the Mountain-Lover knows it and plainly hears their exultant peals of elfin laughter; he turns his back every now and then to the stream ostentatiously, ever hoping that unwarily they will throw off the cloak of invisibility which they swiftly assumed when they heard his first footsteps on the banks of their fairy haunts. He catches their mocking laughter, but he never can turn quite quickly enough to catch the glimpse he craves. The edge of white foam that fringes the brown-green mantle is all he actually sees. He appeals to the saucy nymphs reproachfully; he holds out his hands entreatingly; he promises solemnly not to tell—as if mere words could ever tell!—to another mortal of their mocking buoyant beauty flirting its sparkling drops through the crystal June air, if they will lift for just one instant the pied cloak of amber and green that conceals their elusive gayety.

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"No!" he plainly hears them shout gibingly in tinkling notes. "No!" and "No!" and "No!" He is sure from the sound of their scudding footsteps, scurrying over the surface of the water, that they are whirling all hands around; then he guesses that they are breaking ranks and stooping to scoop up water in their slender hands to fling it over him mockingly in radiant spray, as he springs threateningly on a rock in the midst of the Liliputian stream. Those impish nymphs! The saunterer laughs and stooping in his turn he gathers up slippery handfuls of icy amber water and defiantly flings it back at the little waterfall, as it just here loses its footing and slides down on its back over a broad slanting rock, well smoothed by all the myriads of other little cataracts that have lost their own footing in the self-same spot and have tumbled down in the same ignominious manner. Any normal cataract, big or little, prefers to leap down in its own daring fashion in one swift plunge . . . Frisky, tantalizing little sprites!

But it is something to be sure they are there, even if they refuse to reveal themselves to mortal vision.

This morning is a day radiant with concentrated essence of June and sunshine and brown needles and young ferns and freshly wet earth and pungent woodsy smells and the sheer joy of living. Today it shall be—say the Sidefoot path as far as the Noble trail, then up by that to the ridge, then along the crest to Pulpit Rock; perhaps back by the steep Hedgehog path that tumbles straight down by sharp-edged, broken rock, from under the Pulpit itself. Or perhaps on to the Four Spots and back around by the Green Carpet trail. Oh, anywhere! The Mountain-Lover therefore betakes himself first to the Sidefoot path where it winds obliquely upwards to the left, making its way across a bed of pale-green, almost transparent ferns, avoiding a tree here and getting itself around a rock there; and then lift-

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ing itself up a steeper bit to the point where the Noble trail diverges; the latter clambers uncompromisingly straight up the wooded cliffs, mounting abrupt masses of rock that are like long stone staircases; on and up threads the tiny path through the low-growing spruces, emerging now and then on outcropping ledges which constitute one of the many charms of wandering around on Monadnock, giving repeated delicious vistas of the out-lying world. One is never long shut away from inspiring open stretches, even in deep woods. If not a ledge, then some huge rock-sentinel heaves high its great head . . . Up and still up scrambles the ambitious little trail—the Noble trail—, only occupied in getting itself up to the heights as directly as possible . . . One never treads it without a tender thought of its gallant-souled maker. The world seemed colder when he left it. Does not the great Mountain-Spirit itself miss his presence and his love?

The path finally with a last aspiring jump

springs above tree-line and climbs onto the back of the dolphin-like crest; there it contentedly merges itself in the Bald Rock trail which takes its own climbing way to the huge bulk of Pulpit Rock. From the junction of the trails the way lies on the top of the ridge, with the world spread out on both sides. The north is still shut away by Pulpit Rock, looming high in the near distance. More clearly now are seen the Peterboro' hills undulating in a fascinating blue line into the horizon. Far below, closer against the sheltering mountain, lies the Ark, half enshrouded in its clustering trees, place of quaint delight to its own loving sojourners.

From the Ark comes the path that is known as the "Red Cross Trail" from its picturesque marking. Looking down at it the climber follows its course in fancy across the pastures far below, along the romantic banks of Mead's brook, which having danced and scrambled down in gay leaps and daring dives from Monadnock itself, now, fuller and deeper and beginning to feel

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its importance, goes singing on its way through dim green woods of hemlock and maple and oak. In imagination the climber can see the needle-strewn way striking up some steep pitch, beside the frolicking stream, pausing now to take a loop and find the Spring that Will Hyde found, then sturdily again attacking the abrupt heights, up and up and up, the red cross steadily pointing out the way. Many a time has the climber taken that path and he retraces it in memory, looking down at the sunny, smiling valley below.

Out beyond glimmers Thorndyke Pond in its shining length. On every side dots of dancing sunshine punctuate the landscape from gleaming sheets of water. The climber pulls off his hat and waves it in a general greeting to each loved landmark hailing him from far and near.

Then, finally, in his onward course comes the last steep, but not difficult ascent winding past the old Lead mine, up ledge after ledge till he tops the highest and at last



THE HEDGEHOG TRAIL FROM PULPIT ROCK

stands on the grave and stately mass that juts out, when seen from the west, like a great promontory. Tradition says that when all Monadnock itself was still forest-clad and the haunt of wolf-packs, before the revealing flame had given its splendor to the world, this bald, uprising mass on the long south shoulder was the one open point. From here the line of the crest drops again gradually northward to the deep indentation where lies a little cross-valley between it and the mountain. On the other side of this little cross-valley, rise sharply small precipices one after another as the great peak begins to lift itself from the trees.

The Mountain-Lover flings himself down against a rock with his face to the north. It is the nearest view he has taken of his Giant since his arrival. He holds his breath a little. Though he knows every line and slope and crag and drop of that beloved height, he takes his first thrill all over again, plus all the later thrills, as he gazes. Over the summit, deeply, ineffably blue,

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bends the June sky caressingly; to the northwest a pile of rosy cumuli mounts just behind a craggy point, clearcut in outline against the pure translucent blue. Color deep, soft, thrilling. The northern sky looks like a profound ocean of melting depths, through which could one float forever.

And there is the eagle! Soaring in its strange and stately flight with no visible motion of its wide-spread wings, it wheels and mounts and sinks and rises again, as if with the sheer joy of swinging far aloft in the glowing light. The climber again pulled off his soft hat, this time in greeting to his old friend; for years a pair have made their home here on the mountain, out on the Dublin Ridge,—apparently a preëmpted spot for never are others of their kind seen here. The young are evidently sternly driven forth year by year to fare in less picturesque places. Monadnock would not seem quite itself without the floating, majestic flight of those two wheeling sentinels.

Long the Mountain-Lover lay back against the rock, facing the calm breadth of the summit, gazing at it with love welling up in his heart and listening once more with freshly attuned ears to what the grave, mighty pile had to tell him. Wordless are its impressions as yet; but an indefinable calm slowly smooths out tangles in his tired brain and unties knotted mental muscles. He dreams—and is at rest. When he rises at last from the crisp moss, and stretches himself with lazy delight he feels years younger. The magic of the mountain has well begun.

III.

On his first visit to Monadnock years ago, the Mountain-Lover had learned its first concrete lesson. Not yet wholly familiar with the winding trails that seemed innumerable, he delighted in wandering here and there to discover them and their many connections by himself. On a June morning of vivid blue and green and gold, crisp as only mountain air is ever crisp, he found himself loitering along one enticing little sun-spattered path after another under the Black Precipice. He had gotten onto the Tenderfoot trail and then in some fashion his meandering way had brought him to the Fairy Spring. It was a little emerald-lined grotto formed by a deep shelf at about the level of his eyes, with a roof of overhang-

ing rock, uptipped and moss-covered; over this fell the gauziest sheet of silver water, glinting against the richly cushioning moss, veiling the elfin depths within. At the back of the grotto, which is hardly two feet deep, lies a minute pool in which Titania and all her fairy troop disport themselves in the moonlight—we are all entirely sure—to the music of the silver tinkling of the sparkling water as it falls, in cadences all too fine for mortal ears, into the soft emerald velvet of this tiny dell of enchantment.

The delight of the bit of magic beauty held the explorer breathless. He had caught the scene at its fairest and he hung over it enchanted, for he had come upon it unexpectedly. He had it in mind to find a trail that he had been told wandered up from this spot towards the Sweet-Water Spring and then on around a little-used path, skirting Monte Rosa until one reached the northwest side of that friendly little peak which rises abruptly from the southwest shoulder of Monadnock. Having feasted his eyes on

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the fairy nook, the climber betook himself therefore up a steep, obscure little path that creeps up the ledge back of it and there pursued something that looked vaguely like a trail. Soon, however, it faded away altogether, and the direction was marked only by half-overgrown blazes on the tree trunks. At last he seemed to come to the end of these also; he could see no blaze beyond the one by which he stood, peering forward.

He went back to see if he had mistaken the last marks; no, plainly they were old blazes though hardly discernible from mere knot-holes till he stood close to them. Clearly the trail had led to this point though here it seemed to have dropped into the earth. On the left the ground fell sharply into sun-dappled hollows under great trees which reared noble heads high. There was little underbrush here, but the slope fell with such suddenness that the desired trail certainly could not be down below. On the right towards the mountain was a thick tangle of spruces on broken cliffs for he

was just at the line where the deciduous trees change quite abruptly to evergreens. No trail to be seen up through them. The last blaze was just here at the foot of a rough little precipice, which was irregularly backed by a higher one at a ledge covered with gray-green moss. Scrubby little spruces grew thickly; the whole side of Monte Rosa to the right lifted itself level after level. Where could the little path have betaken itself? How could it have wandered off so completely that every trace of it was lost? The explorer peered more intently around. It was not particularly important, yet he was set on finding that trail. There was that ledge just above at the level of his head, the first step so to speak on the ascent; was that a tiny cairn on it? No, mere accident. Two moss-covered stones casually lying against each other. But this mark by which he stood was surely a blaze? Oh, yes, though the rough lips had nearly grown together.

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It was a delicious spot; a wilderness of entrancing bits lay below him, open vistas through the stately trees. A minute and saucy brook danced near him. The general slope descended by roughly-dropping, brown-needed shelves, all sun-freckled and spicy-smelling. At last the Mountain-Lover threw himself on the ground with his face half towards the heights, for, just visible through the sweep of thinning growth above, was to be seen a veiled glimpse of the west side of Monadnock gleaming pinkly through the green screen. He was warm with his climb and with his search, for the place was entirely sheltered from any breeze. For a time he lay there relaxed against a tree, with its springing roots like an arm chair, reflecting with lazy satisfaction that every spot into which one casually dropped seemed to fit itself as if with premeditated design to the comfort of the tired human frame. His cushion of dry needles seemed peculiarly elastic; the trunk was just the right slope. Juncoes called through the

woods; purple finches winged their flight here and there. A veery swung near inquisitively. Placidly he let himself drift away out on the silence that was broken only by woodland sounds. He half forgot the path for which he had searched. After all, what matter? . . .

Presently something seemed playing with his consciousness and he idly turned his head to see if by chance someone had crept near unobserved and unheard. No one was visible; only the gray-brown tree trunks and swaying branches and slender moosewood and out-cropping rocks were about him. Yet after a moment of listening, a voice—or rather a mere consciousness of words—seemed to sift into his ears, and the words were a long-forgotten fragment of an old Latin sentence. He found himself haltingly repeating a line he had not thought of since his schoolhood days.

“Perge, qua via ducat.” “Go on, where the way will lead you.”

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What was its connection? Who whispered this to him, bringing the words up out of long-submerged layers of life? Vague, baffling recollections assailed him as he dropped back against the trunk, steadfastly looking far above into tree-veiled heights which were now darkly blue with drifting shadow from some floating cloud-mass in the heavens. Who said that—"Go on, where the way will lead you?" Where? When? What teasing memory played with him, bringing those apropos words with their elusive setting?

He looked dreamily upwards and slowly he seemed to be floating backwards through the centuries, drifting across the seas to the sapphire Mediterranean. No, not sapphire, as he visioned it at this instant, but black-gray with one of its wild tornadoes, raging with a mad blast of whirling fury. He had seen it thus once, and had himself nearly been a victim to its brief, terrific rage. Why did that aspect come up rather than the smiling, misty, azure beauty he knew far

better? . . . He seemed to see a shipwreck,—not the one in which he had been somewhat intimately concerned—but a shipwreck of quaint, archaic galleys, whose high decks swarmed with oddly cloaked men, wearing high, peaked caps; feet and legs were bound with queer, sandal-like affairs nearly to the knee. He perceived struggling bodies in the swirling, boiling waters—one picture swiftly flashing over the next—and then he saw straggling ones beating a difficult way to a rocky, inhospitable coast. What were all these kaleidoscopic pictures? He seemed to see deep curving shores between stern promontories, with woods growing to the waters' edge, and a recessed harbor guarded by the jutting cliffs . . . Where did this all take place?—this queer phastasmagoria? Where? Where? He struggled for recollection . . .

He seemed to see a camp made by these drenched, half-drowned mariners; he saw fire kindled—by what agency, he had no idea. He saw one of the band, who seemed

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to be the leader, detaching himself and standing out before the others, with ringing words of encouragement and cheer. He even heard a dim sentence in his ears. "Oh, ye, who have suffered heavier things, the gods will give an end to this also!" It was—it was—what? Of course! He knew. The picture had been etched for all time by that vivid word-artist, Virgil of the golden stylus. And the leader of the shipwrecked band was no other than his old friend, Aeneas—Aeneas of the inexhaustible tears! It was the moment when the shipwreck had been induced by the crafty machinations of the mighty Juno—her bribe to old Aeolus, of the "fairest of women to have and to hold" having bereft the Keeper of the Winds of his allegiance to his rightful overlord, with the consequent unloosing of the tempestuous elements and the devastation that ensued on this wild African shore.

The observer saw at the moment no significance in the vision but amusedly wondered what had recalled these dim memories from

deeply submerged fields. He traced their lines as they grew clearer, emerging from long hidden recesses. Apparently the quest of much-hindered Aeneas for ever-fleeing Italy was now definitely over and he himself was at the mercy of the three Grim Sisters. Most of his storm-tossed fleet was nowhere visible, having been surely engulfed by the raging tempests from which he and the few battered, dripping followers had rescued themselves—with what difficulty! They alone seemed to survive universal wreckage on a wild and uninhabited coast.

The watcher, beneath his quiet trees, as if under some spell, absorbedly regarded Aeneas as he went forth later with his Faithful Achates to explore the hostile region, by which his supposed destiny—to found the Roman Race—seemed to be now definitely blocked. There was no way out. His long trail had come to a hopeless end . . . At the words the climber glanced up smiling

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at the thwarting little ascent where his own trail ended.

Desolately Aeneas and Faithful Achates mounted the first steep places and stood peering eagerly through the wild forest scene where no human being seemed to have stood before. That dim track yonder must have been made by some wild beast of the forest. Plainly there was no way out. The trail ended. But suddenly, behold! down from the wooded heights above them came running lightly a radiant huntress, her raiment girt to her knee, and on her back a quiver of arrows while in her hand she held a slender bow; her shining hair was caught up under her pointed hunting-cap of green. In this human guise came Aphrodite, his goddess-mother, to the rescue of her son, unknown, to guide him in his despair. She answered his eager questions. No, the way was not blocked. Yes, there was a way out. This was not the unhabited wilderness which he thought it. That dim track was really a path and not made by prowling

creatures of the night. Try it! Take the path he saw indicated, follow it, and when he reached the top of the obscuring ridge, he would see suddenly beyond him a wonderful and welcome sight; a rising city fair and mighty, the work of the daring, far-visioned Dido; at the hands of the mighty Queen, who was at once pioneer, leader, ruler and wholly woman, he would find succor and assistance, for she having known sorrow herself had learned its divinest lesson—how to pity others. For how were pity learned except by pain? The huntress points again to the slender, hardly-seen trail leading upwards.

“Do not say this leads nowhere,” finished Aphrodite smiling, “*Perge, qua via ducat.* Take the next step!”

The Mountain-Lover sprang to his feet; he shaded his eyes with his hand, peering down the long golden lanes between the ranks of trees . . . Surely he caught a glimpse of the radiant goddess-mother, disappearing in the rosy glowing mist which

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veiled her as her garments flowed to her feet. He seemed to follow her as she rose like a cloud among the tree-tops out of sight. Aeneas and Faithful Achates staring after her, turned when she had vanished in the ethereal blue and obediently pursued the path she had pointed out. Surely he himself saw them as they grew smaller among the trees till they were lost in the shadows.

Across his eyes the gazer drew his hand confusedly. So vivid had the vision been that he almost heard the shouts, as the two had gained the imaged height and saw rescue beyond. He looked up at the Wise Old Giant benignly gazing back at him through the trees.

"Your magic!" he cried accusingly. "You whispered to me 'Perge'! Well—I follow." He looked at the ledges and at the mossy stones, but he held his steps a moment musingly. "There is more in this than merely finding that particular path! Let me see. '*Perge, qua via ducat.*' I will have

another look at that possible cairn. At any rate I will take the next step, whether it apparently leads anywhere or not. That is what the mountain tells me."

In a moment he climbed on the little ledge beside the stones that had attracted his eye. Yes, he could now see they had been purposely put together but so long ago that on them lay the deceiving moss; and a few steps beyond, but where he could not see them from below, lay another little pile of stones pointing out the way around a slight curve—all hidden from one standing below. It was the little trail he had been seeking, now showing plainly with well-marked blazes again, as he went on; it had all depended on that little obscure cairn, pointing the way from below . . . He stopped a moment to put another stone on it, and then went meditatively on his loitering way, his thoughts drifting over many things.

How constantly life arrived at some blind place and seemed to stop abruptly with a sharp "No Thoroughfare." It would not

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be a question of getting lost and going astray; not a choice of right or wrong; or of right and not-quite-right. Simply blankness where there should have been an indication; a point where one stood bewildered, since in looking back each step of the way seemed to bring one steadily to just that place. Such experiences as he had in mind did not involve the question of shirking an issue, however hard; on the contrary, nothing had been more desired than to go straight ahead, let the difficulties be what they might. How intently he had at such times searched for the clue! Sometimes with long effort he had succeeded in finding it—but often enough he could discern no clue to the path at all—nothing at any rate that looked in the least like one. Not even as likely as the mossy stones that had deceived him below. At such times he had reluctantly abandoned the quest. No Thoroughfare. No use taking that simple step. It could lead nowhere. Yet—had he not sometimes had the mortification of seeing

others come to the same spot in the lost trail—and find the way through? With keener eyes—or with more faith—accepting the unlikely indication? Had Robert Louis meant something like this when he prayed that fervent prayer which seemed to well up from the depths of life, “Oh, Lord! Give me to see my opportunities!” That is, to see the not always obvious cairns on the track of life, none too plainly marked at the best.

The Mountain-Lover began to think more and more concretely. He soon came to the Sweet Water Spring and knelt to drink of the tiny icy pool, protected by the loving care of other mountain-lovers. He went on his way to the left, still slowly winding around Monte Rosa, following the dim little path as it twisted around the out-jutting cliffs and through the woods till the maples and birches gave way as ever to the stunted and gnarled little spruces, leading with the usual suddenness out on the broad open rocks to the west. Onward swept beckon-

ing cairns, leading across to where the Upper Trail to the Great Pasture dipped again into the woods, the path which drops with romantic abruptness down ledge after ledge, till it reaches at last the Great Pasture lying far below, tapestried with its blueberry bushes and grassy tufts. But the climber kept to the upland, twisting his way up and up, scrambling across the rock-faces as best he might. He could not now see the Giant for he was hidden for the moment behind the nearer height of Monte Rosa, but it was beyond and ever beckoning.

At a high point he dropped again on a mossy spot, leaning back against a rock. He often said that his wanderings on the mountain consisted of progressive sitting-down. Not that he was tired but simply to absorb the beauty and the wonder that flowed from the everlasting heights, and to think out his thoughts. For this reason he was more often than not, alone in his idle roaming, for to grow intimate with the mountain-spirit one must seek him in solitude and

must be willing to sit still and listen. He never insists on being heard and he never interrupts conversations. But trust him and he never fails you.

"Perge, qua via ducat." He repeated the words musingly. "Yes. A law of life. Simple—like all laws. I wonder if there is ever a real 'No Thoroughfare' if one faithfully keeps to the path as he sees it through life? Is it that one, going with dulled eyes, fixed only on some preconceived notion of where he thinks the path should go at some given point, simply misses the clue? Which may be there if he could see it? Take the next step—no matter if for the moment it seems to lead nowhere. Make sure you have been right, of course, up to that point. As sure as you can . . . Lord! Give me to see my opportunities! Not to miss my cairns! Give me, O Lord, the seeing eyes!"

His flowing thoughts were apt to form themselves unconsciously into the breath of a prayer. On the mountain one prayed

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instinctively whether or not one did so at other times. The Unseen lay very close to one's heart.

IV

Today the Mountain-Lover came loitering again in this direction. With sandwiches in his pocket, he had the day before him—which he loved. As always when his feet took this now familiar course that first day returned to his mind with fresh vigor. How many perplexities it had helped him through! How often, since that day,—remembering those slighted little mossy stones that lay at the critical place where the path seemed to vanish—he had taken confidently that next step in life although he had seen nothing beyond. But when he had taken it, the next lay open to his view,—and then the next. Perhaps for some distance only one visible at a time, although he so longed to see the whole way! It needed faith. It

was not always easy to go on, just feeling the way with his feet, so to speak. "*Perge, qua via ducat.*" But the necessary thing was to go on—go on. The next cairn. It is there. Have a free mind. Find it. Be unprejudiced. Try anything that looks like a cairn on the road of life. Have the main goal clearly in one's vision. The great definite end. Then keep an unprejudiced attitude towards the route itself. Sometimes it is just a question of what Carlyle wrote: "Do the duty that lies nearest thee; the next will already have become clearer." All the Masters had perceived this elemental truth. The only trouble is that it is all so plain,—this law—that one does not always perceive it—like the famous one who could not see the forest for the trees.

The walker stopped at the Sweet Water Spring to drink from its little rocky cup. Who could ever pass it? Then again to the left—a way he was much more apt to take than the more direct path to the right—for few take this one and he loved it. On again

in the winding way, diagonally upward till the deciduous trees gave way grudgingly to the evergreens, and he came out well up on the steep expanse. He never took any special route across this face of the little peak; he scaled little steepnesses as they opposed themselves to his course, or twisted around between them, delighting in every step of the way.

He stopped at last at a little lair that he dearly loved, well around the peak of Monte Rosa as one rounded the northwestern shoulder; from this point the little-used trail across the ravine to the Marlborough ridge takes its beginning, dipping down into a sharp declivity and rising to the edge of the first little ravine beyond. Further on and above it, a big white stone on the lip of the next ravine, was a clear landmark. The climber dropped into his lair—one of the thousand little spots at the base of a sloping rock with just the right slant for the back; cushioned with gray rock moss, with blueberry bushes crowding closely,

their bluish-lavender clusters begging to be consumed. One could stretch out here at full length with head supported by clasped hands, looking northward into the cool blue light.

The Mountain-Lover sank down into this dear spot with a sigh of joy. As he lay there, the morning sun was well behind him and the color-values to the north were perfect. Long and deeply he gazed into the vivid, liquid blue of the New Hampshire sky with its unfathomable depths, distance behind distance. Battalions of tremendous, snowy masses of cloud marched across the southwest, stirring the pulse with their grandeur. Thunder-storms they betokened in the Catskills far to the west. Possibly here, later. One could not tell yet. At the base of the mountain to his left, over Bigelow Hill, the land undulated in ravishing lights and shadows, tier on tier, till it melted in faint heliotrope into distant Stratton and Couching Lion and Mansfield and all their

sister-peaks. In its cup of green to the northwest lay Keene, bathed in sunshine.

Overhead, wheeling in majestic flight, swam the eagle in the sapphire ocean of space without a stroke of his spreading wings—swinging high, now disappearing over Keene, now back again, now floating to the southwest. Intoxicating business! to float soundlessly like that in that far expanse!

To the right, etched clearly against those depths of melting blue, looms high Monadnock's mighty purple majesty. How intensely blue is the sky as seen behind it! It is sheer cliff from this point of vision; deep indigo shadows rest for a moment on its summit as a cloud-mass for an instant obscures the sun; the lower flanks are unbelievably pink with the contrast. That passes; the light shifts every instant, bringing out new shapes, new recesses, new slopes. Infinite variety of aspects has the stately Giant!

“ ‘Take what is; trust what may be.

‘That’s life’s true lesson.’ ”

The mind of the Mountain-Lover was still on the cairns, as his eyes followed the quiet little guides of the Marlborough-lavine trail, for many were visible from where he sat. He spoke the words out loud to the eagle which swooped nearer him. He could see its white head. His eyes followed it as it lifted itself high once more.

Recent shattering experiences of the war, with all the bewilderment they brought to nearly everyone in their newness to human life; the loss of all familiar landmarks; the sweeping-away of former standards; the puzzlement of former beliefs torn from their roots; lives slashed straight across—it all made readjustment of soul and body necessary in the new, sharp-cornered world in which one found oneself. The Mountain-Lover like most others, had been holding his mind with both hands to keep himself steady, for he could not always tell whether it was he himself that was whirling

around in this mad dance of circumstance, or whether it were the outside world. Or both. His soul ached inconceivably with mere bewilderment of it all—to say nothing of the horror induced by this savage strife. Somewhere, one must find strength to go on. Could he find it sitting at the feet of the Giant? He fixed his eyes yearningly on the calm, unshakable Titan above him with his garnered wisdom of the centuries. Will he give him of his wisdom? . . .

No wonder, pondered the Mountain-Lover as often enough before, that the oldest similies of life and literature are those drawn from the heights. No wonder that the mightiest gods abode on Olympus . . . His memory lingered on the rose-flushed, barren, desolate, low-rolling mountains of Palestine as he had once seen them; ridges that David, poet king, had so passionately loved. How the intimate knowledge of them, etched on eye and mind and heart throughout those long, solitary, boyhood days of the princely lad, when he tended

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his father's flocks on remote steepes, had inflamed his poetry with its intense and Oriental beauty! The "Shadow of a Mighty Rock in a thirsty land!" who could fully understand the simple imagery and all it meant, save one who had stood on treeless stretches under a burning sun, set in a copper sky? "My strong Rock, my Fortress, and my Defence!" No refuge from the blazing, deadly light anywhere but in the indigo shadows. Defence and refuge for heart and soul, as well as for the panting body. "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help!" Ancient words, millions of times repeated, yet with a new message to every torn human heart, in its own time of need.

But this mountain-training of David, the shepherd lad, with its environment of constant difficulty, constant danger, enforcing alertness against the creeping, prowling things that would attack and destroy his helpless flocks, its training in resource of mind as well as in strength of body, bestow-

ing readiness of eye and brain, and instant decision—how all these later entered into his passionately eager, virile life, whether as shepherd or musician, lover or father, prophet or priest, exile or king. The difficulties, transmuted by the strength of the hills, had been his stern teachers.

Strange as it is trite, mused the Mountain-Lover, that all that is highest in unspoiled man compels him to choose the hard; not the flower-strewn way, but the flinty paths that end in a cross-crowned summit, summon his imperatively, even while his lower, ease-loving nature would pull him down to a life of soft places. Strange! the strength of the Divine in him—what else can it be?—that drives man away from the effortless plains, urging him to use the last ounce of human energy if need be, to gain the height by that sharp-edged way that cuts and tears the feet in their blood-marked trail—up and ever up. The Heights, crowned by a Cross draw all men unto them. The green pastures below are the sunny

camping-places of the soul, for a night's stay on the march of life, to refresh the straining muscles, but the business of life—is the March.

“ ‘Difficulties are God's errands.’ Didn't Beecher used to say that?” The man watched a distant solitary climber, who had turned himself away from the rough main trail, in an attempt to scale up an almost sheer cliff. “Why does that lad attempt that? Well—just *life*! Characteristic. An illustration.”

But tackling those difficulties of the climb makes sure the muscles and trains the eye to take advantage of every opportunity and teaches the foot to respond almost before the conscious brain has given its command to take this step or to avoid that loose stone, till at last one moves with an ease and sureness and precision that is bewildering for the untried to watch. The Mountain-Lover recalled a sentence that he had heard William James say over and over: “Into our instant decisions go all our past selves;

every new decision gathers to itself every former one that was ever made." As true in life as on the mountain.

He watched the distant black speck that was an ambitious boy slowly worm his way up the rock, poise himself an instant on the lip of a crag and wave his hands to the world at large in exultation at his achievement; then he disappeared on the further side, to reappear a moment later silhouetted in triumph against the sky.

The Mountain-Lover smiled in keen sympathy. He knew well, not only on this but on far greater heights the

"Wild joy of living! the jumping from rock to rock,

"The rending of boughs from the fir tree, the shock

"Of the pool's living water."

That had been the delight of his own adventurous boyhood—as it had been David's. Now, though his delight was different—and perhaps even deeper—he had those imperishable memories that had gone to the shap-

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ing of his life. They were woven into the warp of his later years and made an integral part of it. Without them, indeed, could he know his present satisfying joy? How vitally the strength of the hills had passed into every fibre! . . . He shut his eyes for a moment as the familiar consciousness of power began to surge slowly through him. Curious! this sense of limitless strength flowing into every cranny of his being, from the very soul of the Wise Old Giant into his! Here, alone with the sky and the clouds and the crags, the blue and the gray and the gold, the incoming tide of new power filled him as completely and quietly as the sea rises in serene pools back of sand dunes on the coast; protected as they are, there is no visible incoming of the tides; the water simply wells up and up till the pools are filled to their sedgy brims . . .

Infinite help! infinite resource! Infinite because the thought and planning of eternity had gone into the shaping and the ruggedness of mountain-ranges . . . It might

have been minutes or hours that the thinker lay there against the sun-warmed rock, with his eyes now closed, feeling new life in every relaxed nerve. After a time he was on longer thinking; he was floating out on a sea of peace.

He opened his eyes slowly at last and drew a long breath as of one made over. So still had he lain that the annoyed junco fluttering in and out of the dwarfed spruce near by had at last concluded he was but a long stone and had ceased scolding. The thinker whistled to the downy-breasted little creature that cocked a startled head at him and flew chattering away. He stretched himself and stood up, eyeing the almost unused trail that lay across from Monte Rosa to the long, gradual descent of the Marlborough shoulder, that here formed his horizon line to the north. This trail wanders along, rising and falling into one little ravine after another; so little-used that last summer he

had found that almost every vestige of it had disappeared and he had cut his way through the tangled underbrush of the bottoms where the growth was dense and had reblazed trees and had replaced cairns. He had brought today his heavy knife in its case, for further pruning where necessary—in case he decided to go across that way. It was one of the delights of the days to let the trail and the inclination of the moment call him. Or *was* it the inclination of the moment? Or did he unconsciously follow the beckoning of his craggy monitor up there?

He was never quite sure. At any rate when he set forth any vague intentions he had in mind were always ready for editing or for complete revision. But here he was—and the wild little trail beckoned.

He dropped down the first descent marked by a chunk of glittering quartz. Down below there was a succession of little moss-covered steps over which the water flowed. He remembered a bit like that in the marvellous gardens of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli. Just

the same effect. He went up the opposite bank where grows a rare cluster of white pines—seldom seen at this altitude. He took the first high ascent and a new view showed itself; it was amazing how a difference in height of merely twenty feet, perhaps, or but a short distance to right or left brought out new aspects. The bunchberries which when he first arrived had been in blossom had now shed their petals and were already gathering together the red bunches of beauty that make every open glade glow with scarlet. Blueberries were ripening fast and were a riot of exquisite color in their various stages—pure pink, pinky-blue, misty, bloom-covered blue, hints of lavender,—or almost indigo; what ravishing color! Too fascinating to eat, these luscious little globes! What utterly different things they are up here revelling in the sunshine and warmth, from the products that appear in little china dishes on the supper table or as prosaic little black dots in culinary compounds! The climber sat down by a pecu-

liarly delectable patch and ate everything in sight; he felt like a vandal,—but they *were* satisfying.

The path went up and down like a waving string, dipping into rough little ravines, across tangled bottoms, along which tiny streams usually rippled, up the opposite, steeply-dropping rocks, or around huge boulders rolled in ages past down from the mountain's wild sides. The trail led out at last on the western edge of a transverse bluff heading the wildest part of the whole great hollow that lies between the Marlborough Ridge and Monte Rosa, where far below the cliff on which he stood, the heavy tangle is practically impassible. On the little plateau on the top of the cliff, lie springs of crystal water, icy under over-hanging rocks; from them go dancing, scampering little rills importantly hurrying on their far way to the Connecticut. Here the clefts and rents in the mountain are jagged and deep and frequently one has to climb around the heads

of many baby ravines. The explorer loved its roughness.

The huge and rosy thunder-caps that had lain all the morning to the southwest in their thrilling beauty were creeping somewhat higher in the ineffable blue and were drifting slowly north. It was high noon, and the climber now threw himself down for prosaic luncheon purposes near the brink of the precipice where grew a green bit of mountain-grass against a rock, with a storm-battered spruce cuddled close against it. By him lay a clear and icy little pool with a sandy bed—the water blue as the sky above and amber in the shadows. With sandwiches and chocolate to consume, and nectar to drink and heart-clutching beauty all round—what more could even royalty desire? Contentment was in his heart. Perplexities were locked up in that remote dungeon where he left them when he climbed; when he had to take them out of durance later, he would have forged new weapons up here with which to meet them and have

gained a new strength with which to contend. But that would be tomorrow. This was today!

The eagle again. The strange, high, swooping flight as if keeping time to some vast organ-harmony of the universe, too deep for his senses to perceive. That high, circling flight—what was its motor power? Now the great bird swept nearer; it was almost over Marlborough Ridge. Now it took a curve nearer his own head and he could plainly see the enormous sweep of the motionless wings. It was so near that he suddenly called to it in a great shout and on his word the eagle jumped! It took a swift, almost right-angled swoop upward. The observer had not realized that anything could disturb that stately flight.

He ate and drank and was satisfied; drenched with content. He watched a col-

ony of scrambling ants on a level bit of sand near him; what errands of frantic uselessness, as far as a mere ignorant human observer could see! They ran hurriedly in every direction and got nowhere. One portly ant raced with desperate speed as fast as it could go, picked up a small log—in proportion to himself—tugged it along, came to a mountain of pebble, toiled and perspired over its top (though he could have gone around in one half second), dropped his log, forgot where he mislaid it, turned right about face and pelted back to his starting place, disappearing into a hole in the ground, doubtless there to discourse to his wife on the high speed of living. But all his fellows were doing the same thing. The observer watched them curiously. Not one apparently was doing anything useful. Amusing themselves, then, as even ants have a right to do, surely? Was it to them a sort of football game in its essence? No teamwork if it were. What useless things they picked up and struggled off with! He won-

dered in watching their aimless expeditions if it was in satire that Solomon recommended man to watch their ways and be wise. He knew all the stories the naturalists told, of slaves and cows and other evidences of ordered prosperity, but to his untrained eye everything seemed chaotic. To him they resembled much more the rich man of the Psalmist's observation who gathereth up riches—in the way of useless stubble and unusable things—and disquieteth himself in vain. Or was it all just the wild joy of living, for them as for him?

The onward path again. Curious how the farther one walked the more rested one became! His way now rose gradually, lifting itself shelf on shelf, leading up to the watershed of the Marlborough Ridge. He gained its crest and looked down upon the gem-like lake of Dublin spread in its fair beauty before him; in this light, a deep cold green.

What deep green lake did he recall vaguely like this one, but more intimately girt with close-set hills sloping to it? A lake so green, so intensely green, so profoundly emerald! where was it? Oh, Nemi! Nestled in those enchanting Alban hills somewhere near Frascati! Marvellous gem it was! everything green in that deep cup! green sides of waving trees, unspeakably green water and with no hint in it of the sky of Italian azure bending over its still depths.

He stood drinking in all the intimate detail of the northern foreground which he now faced. A broad green valley lay between the Marlborough Ridge, on which he stood, and the Dublin shoulder with its trend to the northeast, lifting itself in bold, jutting peaks and sharp salients against the sky. His eyes followed it until it dipped at last in a long slant and melted into the lower levels where Dublin nestled at its foot. Straight to the north he could see Kearsarge and Gunstock and the Franconias and dim on the furthest horizon lay Mt. Washington

itself. But what difference did it make what they were, those illusive, almost transparent outlines? He knew them in some detail; he was well acquainted with those tremendous ravines, such as King's Ravine and Tuckerman's. He knew them with their wide-flung rocks and gigantic boulders, tumbling monsters torn from the mother-mountains, and strewn about as if the places were wild battle-grounds of Titans. . . He knew the subterranean passages beneath those piled-up masses with huge and fearsome cracks yawning across the path. He knew it all, and had exulted in it. . . . Nevertheless this little mountain was the one he loved.

He dropped on the lower branches of a spruce that carpeted the ground in its curious fashion, making an elastic seat, and gazed over the beloved details. He faced to the northeast, and at his right, half behind now, loomed his own Giant, with again a different aspect. . . He let his mind rove over many matters in desultory fashion.

New vistas in his plans opened before him in an odd way that often happened after a day on the heights. He saw clearly without effort through a dozen puzzles. Not because he was searching consciously, but because the clues seemed suddenly to lie open to his grasp.

He rose at last to return. He looked from the west to the east.

Should he continue around the peak itself and take the trail on the east side down? No, not today. He had a fancy to keep on the west side and take his way back by the Monte Rosa trail from the summit; this trail roughly paralleled the one he had taken coming up in the morning, but it lay much higher, crossing the heads of the various little ravines, up and down whose sides the lower track led. Having decided this, the climber came up slowly from the north side where he had been sitting, and approached the pile of stone that made the

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dividing cairn where his way branched from the main trail. As he swung over the crest and faced south, he noted with surprise the changed aspect in that direction. Seeing only to the clear north and northeast as he had been doing the last two hours or so, with the wall of Monadnock lifting itself behind him, he had not noticed how the heavens to the west and south had utterly changed. He paused with an exclamation at the marvellous lights and shadows over the landscape. Three distinct thunderstorms were visible, with blue sky between them; over Stratton, the rain was already a deluge and that horizon was blotted out; further south he could see the little village of Troy, over which were already gathered deep indigo shadows and heavy storm clouds massed magnificently above. Directly south, over Fitzwilliam, the third storm was pouring out its flood and he could see the lightning rend the clouds. Yet Monadnock and all its near foreground was still embraced by a strangely golden light in which

every minutest object was miraculously clear in entrancing contrast with the angry purples of the advancing storms which were surging from the far background.

The three summer tempests were racing for Monadnock, always a storm-lure. The observer cast an experienced eye at the wild contestants in the mad race and then he considered his own downward path. Impossible to reach shelter. The storm would be on him in—say ten minutes. In any event he infinitely preferred the open rocks to the woods. He went down on the Monte Rosa trail for perhaps an hundred feet or so and chose for his reserved seat in the spectacle a great mass of rock that faced southwest, and the other side of which by an acute angle faced east so that when the storm broke he could find on that side some shelter from the cutting west wind that brought the rain. What the force of that wind could be, he knew quite well.

He pulled his soft hat well over on his head and sat down on a little natural seat

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of stone at the base of his rock, and awaited the oncoming storms. He watched their courses appraisingly.

"I bet on the Stratton one," he said. "I give it five minutes."

The strange light grew more and more eerie. Sunshine overhead for the sun still rode in the last unclouded bit of blue. The atmosphere became more deeply, malevolently purple. The whole sweep of the horizon was now lost in the blurring torrents of rain that came marching forward, with their vans still distinctly marked. The side of each storm was cut as if with a sharp knife. The immediate foreground still caught and flung defiantly the sunshine against the encroaching violet. The air was deathly quiet with the hushed, affrighted silence of nature in the face of a storm; every small winged thing had vanished; not even a blade of mountain grass so much as stirred. Then suddenly up from the gorge north of Monte Rosa a slight motion just agitated the forest leaves which had been

presenting white, frightened under-surfaces to the sky. Involuntarily the spectator held his breath. For a moment there seemed to be nothing to breathe.

He looked eagerly from the direction of Stratton, southward; little Troy now engulfed in the rain, was as if it did not exist. Gap Mountain was hidden. The rushing clouds at last caught the sunlight from overhead and instantly dun gray settled over all the world; nearer and nearer with a last devouring dash came the march of the rain from the direct west. He could see the down-pour, still with a clean edge, come on like a consuming monster, swallowing everything in its path. The thunder was now continuous, muttering, rattling. A deep convulsive sigh came up the gorge as if Nature cried, "At last!" Now came the curious slight scampering patter of the advance guard of drops on the quivering mat of leaves far below; a strange icy gust of wind cleft its way to the peak; a deluging rush up the rocky sides—and the storm was upon

him. Stratton had beaten, but Troy and Fitzwilliam were barely a second behind. The world was blotted out.

The spectator crept quickly to the left side of his sheltering rock where the icy wind was somewhat tempered. In one half moment he was drenched to the skin, and he would have been wet to the bones, he reflected, if skin were not waterproof. He was now enveloped in a world of rain and cloud so dense that he could not see three inches beyond his face. The artilleries of the rival storms, now united at the peak, were incessant. Flash! crash! *bang!* Flash! crack! BANG! fireworks on a celestial scale darted and coruscated, and tore apart the clouds like golden rivers. The rain was not in drops but in curtains. In another two minutes torrents of water were boiling down the rocks in cataracts; what had been a tiny rivulet beyond him, was incredibly a foot deep. The climber got up on the next shelf to keep his feet out of the icy pool

that surged around them. Innumerable needles of rain smote his face and blinded his eyes.

Flash! crack! BANG! came the great guns above. Blinding glare would show a sky of rent, fierce, tumultuous clouds in layer after layer. If only he could more easily keep his rain-blinded eyes open, to see those incredible effects of the cloud-masses when the lightning tore them apart! Such marvels of shapes and depths and unearthly colors in them! And also such tremendous gradations of sound in the rolling thunder as it reverberated from every side at once, now near, now far, crashing against the cliffs above, and tumbling its gigantic echoes back on his own head. Mad revelry of the storm-gods! Bang! BANG! Bang! BANG!

Minutes passed. The storm-gods paused to breathe. The fascinated spectator got his own breath. Then it was all on again, rain and blast and pyrotechnics and water spouts. Another pause. A longer one. An-

other onslaught. The spectator knew that now the force of the wild summer-tempest was broken. Minutes passed again. . . No longer were the flashes and crashes simultaneous. Sullenly the storms withdrew in a solid phalanx on their way to the Atlantic, but the clouds still hung heavily around the summit and stretched down the sides. A glimmery effect as of phosphorescence shone through the clinging mist and he knew that beyond to the west the sun was again shining in clean-washed blue, though he could see nothing but vague and towering shapes of cliffs close to him. A few last spattering drops of rain were now and then squeezed out of the thinning clouds—but the storm was over. And it was only twenty minutes since he had topped the crest. The speed of these mountain storms is incredible!

The Mountain-Lover, in breathless and very wet delight stepped down into the pool at the base of the rock. It was nearly up to his knees. He pulled off his hat and



SLOWLY THE MIST LIFTED

squeezed it as dry as possible, and took off his sweater to wring out what water he could get rid of. He stepped forward a little, waiting for the mist to lift somewhat, for it was impossible to get much sense of direction while it was still thick. But he watched with rapture the fairy scene when this happened; it was like being shut into a tiny, pearly gray theatre with diaphanous draperies flirting their drifting, gauzy folds mischievously all about, lifting them now here, now there, in tantalizing fashion, showing distracting glimpses of elfin beauty.

. . . Or it was like swarms of trooping Oreads dancing from point to point, now flinging long veils of opalescent gauziness gaily across his very eyes, now whirling back in impish laughter, while glimmering sunlight filtered down from the blue beyond. . . . The cloudy nymphs were having a mad frolic around the head of old Monadnock today. But slowly the sunlight routed the misty, pearly revellers. Wider

became the circle of vision minute by minute. Muffled laughter floated back as if they called, "We go—but we come again!"

Now what had seemed like a huge spruce on some distant rock, showed as the mist lifted, to be a little ragged tree on a nearby rock. Now the mist settled again in a soft white blanket blurring out the world in a trice. Then it was swept away by a gust of fresh breeze. Clearer spaces thus came and went. Then only soft wraiths of fluffy white remained, creeping from tiny spruce to tiny spruce and clinging lovingly in their branches. Now he could see distinctly down the crags, but he made his way along slowly on account of the pools and baby torrents through which he went. They filled every cleft and every hollow. The mountain was overflowing with lovely sparkling water, gay with its sojourn above in the clouds. The water-music was everywhere, gurgling, bubbling, chattering, singing, shouting, as the myriad drops tried to tell the rocks what they had seen in their

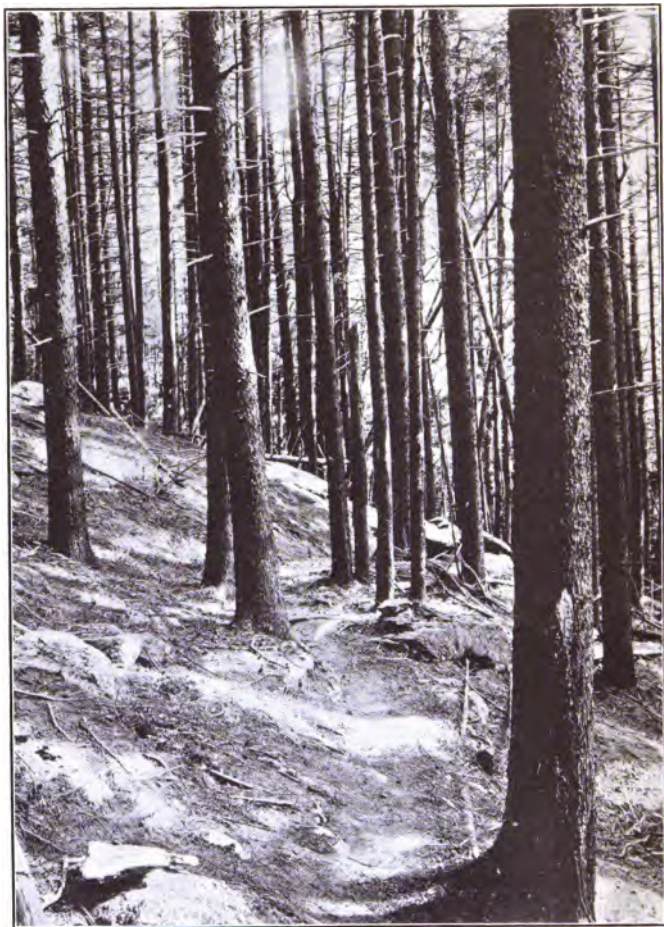
recent skimming in the upper blue. A limpid orchestra.

Now Cranberry Crag detached itself as the walker approached it, with its picturesque Japanesey little trees on its romantic little height. Up this he went and then down on the hither side, but he descended it on his back as his feet slipped in the sopping, treacherous moss and mountain grass. On and on down; he reached the high swampy spot where the cotton-grass grows—now a veritable little lake. He skirted its rippling surface. He turned to his left and presently passed Lot's Wife, shiny and sparkling from her recent bath. A little further and he was at tree-line, and he passed under the swaying, dripping branches from which every baby-breeze sent showers of drops teasingly all over him. But what a storm! How glorious it had been! The magnificent lordly crash of the thunder yet rang reverberatingly in his ears. What a storm! And he was of it!

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"How awful to have been out in all that frightful storm!" commiseratingly remarked the old lady from Waterford that evening at supper. "Couldn't you even get into the woods?"

"Well, no," returned the climber, deprecatingly. He knew they all thought him a little queer. "You see, I felt safer in the open."



ALONG THE SIDE-FOOT PATH

V

This morning the Mountain-Lover had work to do, for proofs must be read, corrected, and sent off in the noon mail. It was not till after midday dinner, therefore, that he could take his joyous way aloft.

Which way to day of a hundred allurements? He had rather thought of the enticing Parker trail leading from the main road below the house, for he dearly loved those crisp pastures with their roughly jutting rocks and intimate details; but after sitting still all the morning—at *real* work, he remarked to himself—his muscles clamored for use. He wandered up the Sidefoot, consequently, to take any offshoot of it that called him. The call came from the steep and slippery Hedgehog path where it leaves

the Sidefoot, up through high woods with its carpet of thick, brown needles, sun-freckled and appealing. The climber rarely took this path on his upland way, for it was much more alluring to strike into it far above when his face was turned homeward and race down it with great six-foot leaps; there is little underbrush hereabouts; maples, with their leaves of golden green as one looks up through them, and the huge spruces of the lower slants, use this as common ground. However—something seemed to beckon him this way and he swung up the steep ascent slowly, for the path was always slippery with its dry and shiny carpet.

He had gone well beyond the Link-path and was bearing to his left, when he heard racing steps above him; looking up the path he saw someone leaping down as he himself loved to do, slipping on the glassy needles, catching young saplings as he came and swinging himself around them with great downward bounds. A most exhilarating method of descent! As the runner drew

close the climber saw him catch at a young sapling that was quite dead and he called out quickly not to trust it—but not quickly enough. The runner caught it, and as he swung around on it, it snapped under his weight and the rash one came rolling downwards headlong into a needle-cushioned hollow.

The climber sprang to his aid, but the runner rolled over and sat up dazed but unhurt, but ruefully rubbing his head. He stared up and the climber stared down.

“Young man,” admonished the climber, seeing the other had hurt nothing but his feelings, “if that had happened ten feet further up, you would have had a nasty fall on that ledge above you and a broken head might have been your lot. It is all right to run down and great fun—but if you do, you will have to look critically at anything you catch hold of; if you swing in that rash fashion on dead saplings or dead branches you’ll easily break your neck. Don’t you know that?”

The runner, a vigorous, sunny-faced lad of seventeen or so, grinned engagingly as he still rubbed the back of his head.

"Got a bump like a pumpkin as it is! But I didn't have time to look and see! Please tell a fellow how you manage that when you are coming down lickettysplit?" He sucked his slightly bleeding palm as he discovered that the broken wood had torn it.

"You just see," began the climber, suddenly realizing how entirely it was a matter of long and almost unconscious training of eye to do this; how subconsciously one would take in every aspect around; how he himself would note without awareness, no matter how fast he chanced to be coming down, whether a branch or sapling to which he trusted his weight was sound; how his foot avoided, as if of its own volition, a loose-looking stone. That habit of the swift, appraising glance, no matter how intent his mind was on other things, had long ago become second nature—or as the Duke of Wel-

lington said, "That habit which is ten times nature."

The climber laughed down at the sunny-faced lad.

"Not used to the woods, are you?"

"Not much. Seashore, mostly. Like to sail. But I'd like this too. We came last evening. My father used to come here, but I never came before. He took me up on the Pulpit Rock trail and then we tumbled into a path which was all broken rocks right under it—Hedgehog—he called it. Then back there when I saw this bully long stretch through the woods, I sprinted. But," returning to the point, as he sprang up, "how in thunder do you see dead wood when you're running, before you grab it?"

"That's part of wood-lore. Disciplined eyesight, I suppose," returned the Mountain-Lover. "At any rate, if you climb much, you'll cultivate it. You'll get bad falls if you don't! Or else don't try stunts. Let your eye be quicker than your hand—that's all. Sure you're not hurt? Is that

your father coming?" He smiled and nodded at the well-knit boy who waved his hand first at the approaching figure, then at himself, and then dashed off down the steepest part of the path with unabated zeal. The climber watched him with interest as he took a flying leap, slipped, and then slid down fifteen feet or so on his back. The observer waited for a moment to speak to the father as he drew near.

"Loose stone," he commented, as they both watched the boy pick himself up again. "Not hurt, though. Oh, well! he'll learn."

The climber took his own leisurely way upwards again as they parted. He left the Hedgehog trail where the little emerald rug of the Green Carpet trail spreads itself under the ice-worn heights of the great ridge above him, and went across its green delights. His thoughts were on the boy and the broken branch.

"What mishaps of life come through lack of this seeing eye!" he mused. "Having eyes they see not and hearing they do not

understand! Unproven statements camouflage as sense. Unchallenged assertions carry specious conviction with them. Untried advisers are accepted at their own valuation. They look sound—but a close inspection would show the rottenness.”

He came slowly up the short, steep bluff that shuts off the Green Carpet dell to the north, turning again to his right to strike into the Pulpit Rock trail toward the Four Spots, meaning to wander on towards Inspiration Rock. As he came out into the open above tree-line, he dropped down for a moment on a rock overlooking the serenity of the Peterboro' Hills. He paused to eat blueberries. The route of everybody is punctuated by blueberries but they never interrupt one's meditations with their gustatory appeal. The thoughts of the climber meandered on disjointedly.

“How often men say in some misadventure, ‘I trusted to so and so for I supposed he knew.’ Why did they suppose so without testing? One good look might have told

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anyone so! How many important operations have I seen go to smash because a critical detail was entrusted to some one who was really rotten at the core, and no one had looked closely enough to see? That investment of mine last winter. Served me right! Looked sound—good returns, apparently—but I should have investigated myself and then I would have seen the conditions were not as represented; only true on the surface. I should have given that suspicious weak spot in the affair attention enough to know it was really rottenness—when I thought it an unimportant detail! Yes, served me right. One thought of this law of the trail would have saved me. Rotten branches indeed! Why should I do in life among important crises what I should not dream of doing up on the mountain? Loose stones! Decayed wood! Dead branches! And unseeing eyes!”

He had come out beyond the Coffee Pot Camp and the calm stretch of the mountain was before him. He looked up musingly at

broad reaches of cliff and bluff and precipice above the green, ribbon-like cleft through which the Paradise Valley way takes its shadowy length. The afternoon sun lay full on the soft, mellow, brownish-gray of the lichened rocks, bringing out every rent and cranny. High in the heavens floated banners of fleecy white foam that might be playthings of the angels, set astream by them, drifting long pennons from some point in the southwest. A west wind blew lightly laden with spicy sweetness. A rare mountain goldfinch made its swooping flight near him. On the breath of the breeze came down from the watching heights, etched against the profound northern blue, a voice that whispered half mockingly,

“Listen and learn, oh, deaf mortal!”

The Mountain-Lover had had with him for a few days a friend who was new to the mountain. They had once done some ice

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climbing in the Alps together, where the appeal had been to the physical and the emotional, and both delighted in the contrast here where the mental, the ethical and the æsthetic overrode the purely physical. Monadnock can never be called strenuous. That is why one has time to think. . .

The two had taken with keen pleasure all the loved trails and outlooks. They had followed the Upper trail to the Great Pasture, along the west side the Monte Rosa, down through the woods, coming back by way of the Cart path and the Twisted Birch. They had dropped down under the Matterhorn and had looked up at craggy Point Surprise towering above them. They had gone far out on the Dublin Ridge past the Sarcophagus, following the waving path as it meanders up and down the peaks on that long, stern shoulder, to where the path drops down into the woods, leading to the little village by its green lake. They had gone over the Jaffrey shoulder and taken the old White Spot trail down far below,

crossing over to the Ark trail and coming up that way. They had visited the Tufted Spruce and explored the many twisting trails on both sides of Mossy Brook, and they had gone down into Dingle Dell and swarmed up Inspiration Rock.

The friend had gone on his way, and the Mountain-Lover was alone again. One reason why he so constantly wandered off by himself was that most people in starting out very naturally wanted to get to some particular point—and the Mountain-Lover never cared whether he arrived or not. He liked best to set off with some destination only vaguely in his mind, and he loved to be free to change it as the fancy took him. Perhaps more often than not he found himself fulfilling the first half-formed intention, but he preferred to be untrammelled by the usual masculine desire to do a thing—of no particular importance, it might be—simply because one has announced that object. He was not without sympathy and understanding of those who liked to pursue a definite


plan—and he was quite willing they should have that pleasure; only, not with him.

“With previous intentions I have nothing whatever to do,” he liked to say largely to himself when he suddenly swerved from his first plan if some unexpected enticement offered itself. This was his playtime.

He betook himself to the Monte Rosa trail this morning, loitering along until he should hear the call of some special path. The way above the spring was this morning edged with the strange lapis-lazuli blue of *Clintonia* berries with their dull richness of color. He took the trail to the Tooth when he came to the branching of the paths. Every path was so intensely characteristic! If he had been dropped on any of them blindfolded he thought he could tell almost unerringly when he opened his eyes, just where he was. To newcomers or to casual observers, it might be that all paths looked alike; narrow, almost imperceptible tracks, winding among trees, jutting rocks on one side or the other, moss, *Clintonia* berries or bunch-

berries everywhere, little ascents and drops of the path, moss and maples, spruces and blueberries all around. But to say, nevertheless, that they were all alike was to say that the human race is all alike because all men have two eyes, a nose and a mouth. There are people who say that all Chinese look alike to them; or all negroes. Also, all mountain paths.

As usual the deciduous trees swiftly gave way to the hardy spruces which defy the upland winds even though tortured and twisted and stunted by them. Trees only five feet high, up here often have a diameter of seven or eight inches; their lowest boughs may carpet the ground for a distance of ten feet in the direction away from the prevailing knife-blade winds of the winter, making an elastic bed on which one may lie. Always the trees are one sided, throwing out their defiant, blunted green pennons away from the wind. Courageous little warriors! Battered out of shape, thwarted in every design of symmetry, balked in their ambitions,



plundered of their hopes, frustrated in their growth, valiantly they stand their ground; undismayed they lift their bold little green heads. Always close to them creep the weltering blueberries, decorating themselves with their tiny globes of lusciousness, exquisite bloom on the pinky-blueness.

The Mountain-Lover came out of the last little cleft between these indomitable little green soldiers, and approached the huge, jutting Tooth which slants from its base with deep shadow beneath. A sheer sweep of bed-rock here. Under the Tooth the climber sat himself down to take in at his leisure the wide-rolling and lovely view to the south with Gap mountain in the foreground. Its slippery, grassy double top caught the sunlight; its sides were melting yellows and greens. From the distance, the eyes of the observer turned to the lichen-growths near him, with their spreading map-like decorations; what colors were hidden in their crumpled folds! stains of yellow, of brown, scarlet, gray and green. Strange,

subtle harmonies which one must look closely to observe, for at the first glance they look dun-brown. Only those that have eyes may see.

The loiterer rose and glancing around, slowly headed his way towards the Black Precipice and the Amphitheatre trail... In one of the little hollows he saw ahead of him what looked like a moving bunch of brownish leaves. It was a porcupine, waddling unconcernedly along with its whitish-brown quills folded down peaceably. The observer had never seen one so far up here before and he followed its ungainly course for a little distance with much interest, till quite undisturbed by his proximity it finished its daily exercise and retired to its rock fastness. Two or three quills lay on the ground near and the observer lifted them with an interest that was always fresh. What marvellous things were these hollow quills with their points of needle fineness!

On over the Black precipice. Then along the rocks to the top of the Staircase; slowly across the little dip in the shoulder, to the Four Spots, with a vague eye on the upper ledges. Now he was looking northeast. He pulled off his cap, letting the north wind lift his hair. Today low strata of opalescent clouds lay banking the horizon and the softest fairy haze lightly veiled the landscape, giving it a spiritual and unsubstantial beauty like a dream-country. The world looked transparent. In the low-lying clouds were all the tints of mother-of-pearl and the sky above was of blurred English blue, not glory-giving Italian azure. It was a landscape in which the Mountain-Lover particularly delighted—though he smiled as he thought the words, since whatever aspect offered itself, he was apt to think it was one which especially charmed him.

Up above, in the last stretch of the Red Cross trail, nearly under the peak, a scarlet-sweatered climber made a vivid blotch of color. Below fell the Dingle Dell trail with



UNDER THE BLACK PRECIPICE

its marking-stone of white quartz. He was just turning to the north, when he heard a clamoring voice hailing him from behind, and as he looked down the Dingle Dell trail in the direction from which the hail came, he saw some one—a very puffy and disheveled some one—who called to him in no uncertain terms. This one announced at the top of his lungs, as he toiled upwards, that he was lost. He summoned the wayfarer above him to stop and tell him where he was. He made parenthetical and emphatic comments on so-called paths that did not exist—as far as he was concerned. He implied that they were unworthy of any dictionary interpretation of the name.

The climber waited sympathetically. The toiler mounted, still puffy ejaculating, till he gained the rise where the other stood at attention, and gasped out further explanations.

He had arrived last evening, late. He had never been here before, but he had often seen the mountain from a distance and

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knew it for a small one. He had intended to climb it this morning, and then after dinner to take the Lost Farm trail to the Ark. Come back by automobile and the next day do all the rest of the trails. The listener smiled but said nothing. The newcomer observed he wished to do it all up at once as he could not stay long. He had inquired this morning of several people at the house, and they told him the Paradise Valley trail up to the top was the best; not so steep. He had obtained a map. He had set out, per instructions, on that—what did they call it? Side Foot?—Well, he walked on the sides of his feet all the way up. He was to come out at the top of the Staircase. Oh, yes, it looked all plain on the map. Then he was to take some way over the rocks and come into the Paradise Valley and go up that path and strike the summit quite easily. He had seen a picture of the Main trail called the Last Arrow. It was surely steep and this, they said, was better. So he tried the Side-foot, and came out at last on the top of some

rocks. Didn't see any Staircase—unless it was all Staircase. He couldn't see anything but high rocks. Map useless. Didn't look anything like it should. Nothing that looked like a Valley, much less like Paradise. Well, he browsed around a little, and saw those stones that they told him marked a way. Cairns? Thank you. So he followed them, hoping to find a Valley that led up, though he had always supposed that valleys led down. Ever climbed mountains before? No. NEVER. This was the first; likely to be a very emphatic last. He liked good level seashore where one could see where one was going. Asbury Park for him. But—well—he kept going after those little stones. Oh, yes, he could see them all right. He wasn't blind. But the blamed things kept on going down; it was into a valley all right, only he wasn't going where he wanted to get—on top. First he thought it might twist around somehow. At last he concluded to turn around and try some other way—but he didn't realize how far down he had gone.

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Then in turning he had somehow mislaid that emphatically inconspicuous path—which still did not consort with dictionary definitions—and he found he had lost cairns and directions into the bargain. He had therefore been stumbling around down there, until he had at last broken through into the open—and then, thank Heaven! he had seen some one he could ask.

Having thus delivered himself he ran down, panting. His narrative had been shot out, not perhaps in one breath, but in a staccato succession of breaths; he stumbled into a few periods, but they were clearly rhetorical only, and not intended for full stops. The state of his trim brown business suit—for he was dressed as if for Tremont Street—the scratches on his shining tan shoes—for traces of high polish still lingered amid abrasions—his scratched but well-cared-for hands, his hat pushed back from a rubicund, reeking countenance, which, in spite of his difficulties, showed, the observer was interested to note, an in-

eradicable good humor—all testified to the truth of his panting Odyssey.

The Mountain-Lover took up the refrain, all sympathy. Yes, it was hard at times to find one's way on the paths, especially when they crossed; no, perhaps they were not very plain to a stranger. The trail he should have taken led up around that little precipice that he had faced when he first came out into the open. He could follow the little cairns back across the rocks in this dip, and he would easily find the Sidefoot again and thence down to the house.

But the lost one, perspiring but undaunted, scoffed. He avowed his undiminished determination to get up that old Peak if he burst in the attempt. That was his unswerving determination. He would possibly resign his intentions as to the Ark Trail for the afternoon, but for him it was Pike's Peak or perish. The Mountain-Lover greatly admired his pluck and in accordance with this admiration he found himself offering to go back and plant the feet of this

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energetic explorer firmly in the trail of Paradise Valley, the charming high green cleft that runs close to the east slope of the summit. Gratefully the other accepted the offer of guidance and when they turned, he made his uncertain way behind, his feet slipping now and then on the weather-worn rocky slants; he even sat down unexpectedly once, with some emphasis. . . They came to the divide, where he had first mislaid his path, and his guide showed him where he had made his mistake. Then as they stood on the little watershed where they could now see both east and west his guide indicated the view, but with no comment. The Lost One guardedly admired it as being "extensive," and wished to know the name of every respectable eminence in sight, but he plainly kept his previous opinion as to the paths, which he apparently thought should be macadamized. Still he showed a certain open-mindedness when he remarked, after glancing appraisingly at the knickerbockers, golf stockings, and rubbersoled shoes of his



FROM THE CLIFF WALK DISTANT HILLS RIPPLE TO THE SKY-LINE

REPRODUCED BY THE COURTESY OF STURGIS M. THORNDIKE

guide and then at his own Tremont Street array, that he could plainly see there would be somewhat greater interest in the climb, for him, if he could plump his feet down like that on the rocks. For himself, he wasn't walking; he was stepping.

"But it's some view," he suddenly concluded.

Then he scanned with interest the immediate spot on which they stood and compared the directions which the guide indicated, with his map. Oh, yes, he had seen those little stones up there, but he didn't think there was sense in them. It looked as if he couldn't get around up there, and so he didn't try them. Seemed to him that the way he had taken was more sense. No, he hadn't exactly lost his way here, so much as taken the wrong one. Down there in the Dinky Dell trail he had lost his way if you like, for he had turned around just a few times and suddenly the path had walked off.

The Mountain-Lover smiled. Then something in the confiding aspect of his new

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friend made him to his own surprise suddenly break his own fixed principle of never giving advice—a principle wrung out of many past experiences—and proffer a suggestion for the future, apropos of being lost, in the remote chance that the newcomer might be tempted on a future mountain exploration.

“You might find this suggestion useful,” he therefore offered; “as soon as you find you are lost, remember that then the path cannot be far away, for you could not go a dozen feet without knowing you have strayed from it. Just here is the trouble, for most people at this point begin to hunt around frantically and almost immediately they lose all sense of direction. The woods to the casual observer look much alike on all sides and in a moment you are not sure from what direction you came. So here is the point; the moment you realize you are lost, tie your handkerchief to a high bough to give you a center, or a landmark; remember your path is still close at hand some-

where. Now circle around your handkerchief, first in small circles, then in larger ones, peering carefully to right and left, for these narrow trails can scarcely be seen except lengthwise. You must look directly into them to find them, generally. You have your landmark handkerchief to keep you from wandering away from the spot, you see. Now there, within a circumference probably of twenty feet and almost certainly within fifty, will be your path. You can usually find it within five minutes, and yet from lack of this simple bit of knowledge, many a man has been hopelessly lost."

The lost-and-found-one listened with absorbed attention, still mopping at intervals his moist and beaming countenance.

"Holy Peter!" he exclaimed, after a moment of ruminating silence. "Sounds simple. Stop in your tracks the moment you know you are lost. Make a landmark. Find your path and get back. Don't get lost any more than you are."

His guide was lost in admiration at his quick, businesslike way of grasping and phrasing the suggestion.

"Ever been lost yourself? Tried it?" pursued the other.

"Yes. Not here. Adirondacks. Would have been pretty serious but for my remembrance of this bit of woodcraft. I learned it from Stewart White."

"White? Stewart? Boston? I don't know him," returned the lost-and-found-one briefly. He leaned against the rock and seemed to be chewing and digesting the idea which had just been presented to him, finding in it unsuspected papulum. There came a little intent scowl on his rubicund but no longer dripping brow as he explored the unwonted track of metaphor in his practical mind.

"I like that." He took up the cud of the advice and set his teeth in it again. "I like that idea. It has sense because you can get lost in more places than the woods." He spoke with staccato pauses of reflection.

"You get off the track in life pretty easy. And gettin' back is the very Old Boy. Just kind of do the wrong trick just for once, you think, and by jinks, you may get in the brambles for keeps! Business men know!"

The Mountain-Lover waited with wonder-struck interest. If a fat rabbit from the bushes had hopped out and sat up and given him instructions in mathematics he could hardly have been more astonished than at this unlooked-for application. He glanced up at the Wise Old Titan bending his benignant face over them; who would have dreamed that in this plump and prosperous merchant there would have been a listener?

The speaker went on, striking his short forefinger in the palm of his other hand for emphasis. His quick business imagination—for he surely had that variety, if no other—sifted its own grist from the hopper.

"Tell you what I thought of, quick as you said that," he went on in breathless earnestness. "In our business—I'm jewellery, near Providence—have a biggish store—there's

a young feller I been sorter interested in. Good, promisin' chap. We find it pays to sorter keep an eye on the young fellers outside business—find out what they do—where they spend their evenings; all that. I'd liked this one. Well, some time ago, I began to suspect something was wrong; he was spending too freely for his salary—see? I suspected he was playin' high perhaps. Found out he was. Boy didn't even know he was off the track, you see! Beginner's luck. I watched him a little because I didn't want him to go wrong—but it's mighty easy to go wrong—just kinder step aside, and there you are. Just like you said. Next thing, he was mighty glum. Losin', I thought. He's got a good business head on him, and I didn't want him to go wrong. I kep' my eye on him for weeks—couldn't really find anything wrong but kinder sensed it. Then—I began to suspect some monkeyin' with the books and I found out his wife—she's a pretty, young thing—was ill and had to have an operation. Then—

things happened—ain't necessary to go into that—but he was frightened to death, and *way* off. I kep' my eye opened wider and I was sure he was lost—just as you said. Was just runnin' round and round and gettin' worse off every moment. Just like you said. Couldn't find his way back and it was pretty brambly."

The speaker stopped to disentangle himself. His guide listened in absorbed interest to the jerky narrative.

"Just here I found something to put my hand on. No one else knew. My partner was sick for a long time, so that was easy. Got on to it good and sure. Had him up before me. I been a boy myself and I know how it is—mighty easy! Mighty easy!" The kindly face began to look radiant to the absorbed listener. Utterly unegotistical in this aspect, the talker was merely interested in following out haltingly the application he had oddly enough detected.

"Well, in another week he'd have gotten where I couldn't have saved him. He'd of

been over the edge for sure! He'd gotten off the path first in that gamblin' business. Was lately married and it was more expensive business than he thought. She was a good little thing, but inexperienced. What could you expect? Made money first. Easy money. Then, of course, he began to lose. Old story. Couldn't get out of the tangle, as I said. Handled firm's money—was a good bookkeeper—easy for him to juggle things a bit. Yet strange to say, he wasn't prison-fodder—not a bit of it. Just nothin' but *lost*. Frightened to death. Then the little wife. He adored her and she got appendicitis, and it all got worse. Had to have money—and he played again, hopin' to win. You can guess! See?"

The listener nodded, watching him intently.

"Mighty nice lad!" reminiscently. "Well, I had him in my office—and—well—it all came out. Kinder sullen, at first. Kinder bitter." The fat, red face grew more eager till it fairly shone, but he did not dwell on

the kindliness of an understanding attitude that changed the sullenness and bitterness. Probably he did not think of it. Happened so, he would doubtless have said.

“Well, sir, we thrashed that all out. He saw where he got off wrong. Gamblin’—at first just for fun. And all the rest followed. I talked to him like a Dutch Uncle. We settled it all and got him back on the right path. He is to pay it all back little by little, and of course we saw his wife through. ’Twasn’t fair that she should suffer because he got off the path. But he is on again now, and workin’ like a horse. He won’t lose the track again, not on your life. . . I see it all. He’d orter have made a landmark of his real honesty when he first got off and tied to it and circled around it till he found the path.” The speaker again dried a perspiring brow, confused in his efforts to express unaccustomed metaphor. His mind was scaling unwonted heights of expression and his words clambered slowly after it.

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"Say! it let's me in for a whole lot!" he suddenly concluded with the air of a man holding in excited horses. He got up from the rock lumberingly and brushed off his clothes mechanically. There was a new look in his eyes as he glanced slowly from side to side of the fair expanse, and then turned a searching gaze aloft to the peaks.

"Something up here in this air—I guess it is—that makes you think of things."

The listener smiled enigmatically.

"Yes—I notice it. I'm extremely interested in that story. Too common, as you say. Yes, 'To understand is to forgive.'" He also glanced again at the mountain. Wise Old Titan!

"Come on, now!" said the jewelry-dealer briskly. "Mornin's gettin' on. Up there, you say? Hanged if I see the way around that edge there. Looks as if you'd fall off; plenty of room when you get there? All right! If you say so." He settled his hat firmly on his head, thrust his map in his

pocket, drew a profound sigh, and started for the little precipice.

The Mountain-Lover found himself moving on before him, with no conscious decision in his mind to do so.

"I'll go up with you. I was not going in any particular direction this morning. No, not at all. I always enjoy it."

The oddly assorted pair went up the first ascent, while the Mountain-Lover smiled again quizzically to himself. Most unexpected listeners the old Titan found! But he was quite willing to do his own share when the opportunity insisted.

VI

The Mountain-Lover had been wandering along the Amphitheatre path again, and had left it at the broken gorge to climb straight over the rough head of this until he should come out behind the little height of Cranberry Crag. It was a friendly view of the Giant which one had here, absolutely different, as usual, from any other. He dropped down in one of his innumerable favorite lairs where he could gaze up with the welling devotion those gray walls always inspired. . . As a thousand times before, the question came to his mind, why this small mountain was so inexpressibly dear; so intimate and so great a Teacher. He knew many great mountains; our own Adirondacks; the White Mountains; the North

Carolina ranges tossing in their careless wilderness; the Rockies in their magnificence; the young, sharp-edged peaks of the Alps. He loved them all with a broad, impersonal affection, but no one of them ever took hold of his very heart as did this intimate and personal Monadnock. This alone, in an inexplicable way, was like his

“Life’s ornament,

“To mix itself with each event.”

There was an extraordinary graciousness about the mountain with all its strength and ruggedness; a friendliness, as if glad to let its garnered richness of wisdom flow out like healing balm on all who stretched out longing hands for its renewing. It had that graciousness of a great soul, that going through the Valley of Baca, had made of it a well, and not a draught of poison bitterness. . . . A great soul in which centres the harvest of ripe experience and leadership; whose musings have delved deep into the unknowable, bringing back as from a treasure-house things beyond speech but which

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the yearning heart of another may yet receive through some unknown osmose.

The Mountain-Lover thought of the mighty ranges of the Alps; of icy Matterhorn piercing the sky in its imperial isolation; of the Ice-Maiden in her white austerity standing by the Monk with the Youth beyond, drawing her white skirts haughtily about her feet; of Mount Blanc in mighty majesty and cold pride of expanse. These drew and thrilled their devotees as the desire of the almost inaccessible ever draws and thrills the heart of man for conquest. But did their devotees feel for these huge mountain-masses the depth of inexpressible tenderness and the personal longing and the sheer delight in intimate beauty that the lovers of Monadnock felt for the Wise Old Titan? The watcher had never heard such expressed. Myriads of men were yearly drawn to the attempt of those austere heights of the Alps as if with a lodestone, but countless men had those grim peaks—as if with rage at the attempt

for conquest—flung remorselessly back, down into their black crevasses, ever yawning for victims, or buried them deep in their cruel white blankets, as relentlessly as Eastern deities sacrifice their worshippers.

The Mountain-Lover felt their strange enchantment, but it was only this “Great little mountain” that with its inexplicable personal quality, that drew and held his heart.

“Joy-giver and enjoyer,” said Thoreau, looking deeply into Monadnock. The Mountain-Lover as he lay full length upon his water-worn cradle of rock, put his hand caressingly on its garnet-flecked sides, fancying that the now purpling masses above him—how the lights quivered and changed every moment!—delighted in the wooing sunlight that crept along its crest and that it loved the dappled shadows that played endearingly with its crannies and recesses. He fancied as Wordsworth imagined of the moon, that with delight the deserted summit must look around it “when the heavens are bare” and that in some mystic way it

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must flash back signals of joy and love and understanding to the far glimmering lakes lying in the scattered hollows of the fair country-side, their waters rippling in the midnight wind, tossing back the dancing stars, since their every drop had once caressed his own rugged shoulders on their downward way. Oh, surely the brooding spirit of the mountain must rejoice in that far-flung beauty, while it lies there, chin on hand, waiting with flawless patience for heaven's perfect hour. . . . The world drifted away as one gazed.

"Hither we bring our insect miseries to thy rocks,

"And the whole flight with folded wing

"Vanish and end their murmuring."

In the sight of that stately, willing patience shall not one's own sorrow become, even to the sorrow-stricken, an impertinent thing? A thing that after all takes no more root in the world than the fleeting shadows on the rock's calm face?

"Fretful child! In the time of thy trouble He shall hide thee in His pavilion! In the secret place of His dwelling He shall hide thee! He shall set thy foot upon a rock of stone."

Surely a voice spoke.

For three days a great storm had raged, and had retreated sullenly. The early morning had shown its power still holding, but slowly the wind shifted and by noon the storm clouds had acknowledged themselves vanquished, reluctantly drawing off their massed cohorts. By noon, with incredible swiftness came golden light and radiance indescribable, filtering through the rain-scrubbed air, and a serenity that seemed to steep one's soul in its essence. It was like a miracle to see how swiftly the clouds had vanished from a sky of pure ultramarine.

In a moment the Mountain-Lover was off for the heights of Jaffrey Overlook. It

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was sheer joy to spring briskly up the steep, wet path—no loitering today—up and up and up! Joy to be climbing again after three days of bondage in the house, except for brief excursions down the road to the gate, a mile and a half away. The woods were still drenched and the rich, indescribable odor of rejoicing earth fresh from its bath rose on every side. The few birds that August had left recalled their June jubilation in mad joy of living. The note of the hermit thrush came flutily from the direction of Monte Rosa across the steep declivity between. Everything was free again.

The climber reached at last the spot he had in mind. It was a point of vantage that Thoreau loved, on the east side of the unsuspected, high-nestled little mountain meadow, in the middle of the small plateau which lies under the east flank of the summit. He found his sheltering nook; a pew-like ledge with blueberries creeping close to his hand along the crevice between seat and back, and at his feet a little charming

carpet of cranberries, matted and close and clean-cut, with glowing little globes of scarlet still yellow on the underside, hiding their unimagined spiciness in their firm polished plumpness. The tiny shining leaves were a delight to the eye.

In the middle foreground as one looked towards the summit lay the swampy little meadow with every shade of russet and brown and red and pale green, rejoicing the artist. Beyond it rose flanking walls and broad bed-rock surfaces; the meadow stretched to the edge of the torn rocks of the interjacent gorge which lies like a rough knife-slash close under towering heights. The sweep of the mountain from this point is perhaps the most splendid vision one may obtain of it; precipices, now sharp, now slanting; bare cliff basking in the sun; deep little black recesses in its rent sides; incredibly ancient, determined little spruces knotting themselves into crannies and cracks and clenching every vantage-point with their tough roots, their dark green embroidered

against the grayish-purple background; and surmounting all, the bold and splendid outline clearly etched against the dazzling sky.

The climber had the mountain to himself. The storm had cleared too recently for any one but himself to be abroad. For three days had the rain lashed furiously that granite mass, and so deeply had the clouds enveloped it that only at brief moments when mad winds flung aside the obscuring veil could it be seen rising vast, black, inscrutable. There towered the mountain, calmly biding its time. The fury of the wind could not stir it; the rage of the lightning could not affect it; the mighty artillery of the thunder left it unmoved.

Now that the storm had passed, Monadnock rose again against the blue, "busy with its sky affairs," absolutely undisturbed, absolutely peaceful. What mattered the might of wind and driving storm? They had passed. So had they always passed. All was as if they had not been. To the watcher



ON THE SUMMIT DEEP CRYSTAL POOLS REFLECT THE SKY



on the stone seat words floated into his consciousness.

"The storms can endure but for a night. Peace comes with the morning. Oh, soul! tarry thou the Lord's leisure! Be strong and He shall comfort thine heart!"

Surely a voice spoke.

Above towered the unshaken, sunflushed mightiness, shining with countless, thread-like rills trickling down every crevice or slipping over broad slants in transparent, glinting sheets. There was the message again—one of unassailable peace; of unconquered endurance. The storm was over. What matter if it came again? It would pass again. Some things are to be fought, but some must be endured. So one cannot fight storms; one lives through them. Shall one rage in bitterness against the tempests of life? With that bitterness and resentment which crumbles all our power to dust? Do not the hard things we *bear* go as completely to the fashioning of man as the hard things we *do*? If the muscles of the soul

demand conflict to strengthen them, the lungs of the soul require the steady intake of the breath of endurance. Bunyan, who portrayed the Hill Difficulty up which the soul must toil, also painted the Dark Valley of the Shadow of Death through which it must pass; here it meets not demons to be conquered, but riving sorrows to be borne. There is nothing to fight. Everything to endure. Through the quagmire of agony must the stumbling feet tread—and one lives on as best one may. But—the end comes.

While we are in the world it is the way of the world that storms will come. Let them come.

The father of the Mountain-Lover had been a clergyman and his training had been in the Theological Seminary under the keen and wise old Bishop Williams of Connecticut. A favorite if enigmatical piece of advice he frequently gave to "His Boys," as he loved to call his students, was this:

"My boys," he would say to some beloved group at parting, "you will appreciate this

piece of advice more when you are older than you do now, but I want you to remember it. It is this: when it rains—*let it rain.*”

The climber, who had heard the story from his father many times, himself appreciated the sage, calm wisdom of this simple advice more deeply as the years passed. This afternoon the words returned to him with renewed meaning, as he looked deeply into the heart of Monadnock. That counsel was what the mountain whispered. When it rained—let it rain. How could anything so transient as even the most raging tempest affect its inner, inscrutable calm? . . . Even as one gazed, its ineffable peace, its unshakable serenity like a benediction shed themselves upon the heart.

The sunset drew on. Changing colors began to play caressingly over the rocky cliffs which slowly grew rosy-heliotrope, as are the violet-wreathed hills about old Athens. The emerald spruces took on a softer, warmer green; the mellow leaves of the maples far below were drenched in golden

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light. Every moment the values changed. The poignant distant note of the hermit-thrush thrilled through the air. . . . The glorious colors deepened. To the west the sky above the horizon was palest green with long-drawn clouds lying between golden strips of apparent sea; above, the clouds melted into turquoise and then by mysterious gradations into salmon and into flamingo pink and deep rose and flame color. Overhead all was soft purplish tones. And well the watcher knew that such color, such piercing beauty must have had tempest preceding them.

The Wise Old Giant spoke softly to his listener.

“So the storm passes. Suppose trouble and disaster and crushing disappointment and shattering disillusion sweep over your soul. Suppose they even strip you bare as my riven sides were stripped bare by fire and flood long years ago. What matter? It all passes. You can only lose what was not truly *yours*. New beauty, new hopes, new

development will come. Keep your feet steady; your head above the clouds. It passes!"

"Yes—it passes!" repeated the listener. "Thank God! Eternity is not here!"

He turned his meditative gaze from west to south and east. He seemed to be alone in a world of unbelievable beauty, bathed in molten, golden light which like a palpable thing might have flowed from the throne of God. The far hills of Vermont looked like fairy transparent lines, distance melting behind distance, as the sun sank.

"The storm passes! God is behind the storm—somewhere."

He threw an intent look across the huge, wide-stretched shoulders of the Monadnock, all drawing up into that central stability. He thought of that solid rock of which he saw only the crest, reaching far down into the bosom of the earth, part and substance of the very framework of the globe whereon he trod.

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"It is this sense of an unshakable foundation that gives the conviction that the old Titan is unassailable," he mused. "His foundations are a part of the earth itself. That knowledge is what we so yearningly crave in life. We reach out so longingly for what is unshakable; for something on which the soul can stand; for something that is founded upon a Rock. Where is it!"

He went back in mind slowly over those now distant, soul-shattering days of 1914, when convictions of civilization, of Christianity, of God Himself, were rocking dizzily before a stunned and paralyzed world. What an outcry had gone up in those first terrific, mad months, that the whole elaborate fabric of life was a blank, dead failure. Men had gone around with haunted eyes as if they had laid their dearest in a black grave, with no hope of resurrection beyond. Their hopes, their ideals, their very faith were being buried fathoms deep.

But the slow change crept on. Even before the end, even in the face of all the

heaped-up horror; of all the eager, unshrinking sacrifice of magnificent youth; in the face of the shuddering knowledge brought to the ravaged hearts of mothers and the sharp-edged burdens of fathers—yes, in the very teeth of the storm while it raged most fiercely there strangely crept over the world an ever-deepening sense of a vast Power of love and mercy behind the crash and the ruin. A Power that would one day vindicate itself. A conviction of an unassailable foundation. Whence came that irresistible, intangible conviction that was absorbed into the very fibre of human life? And now that the tempest of war was spent, even though the bark of human life felt itself still tossed in the long ground-swell that follows the storm, even though waves of extravagance and mad unrest and crime still broke on the shore—yet the inner heart of man was dimly conscious of the Presence in human life of One who in quiet majesty of Power had once said to the waves, “Peace! Be still!”

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There was Eternal Power. There was an Eternal Foundation.

He listened. Again the Mountain spoke:

“Sometimes all the accretions of life, which are not true growth, need to be stripped away. Men saw not my foundation rock, until flame and flood stripped them bare. War has stripped bare the souls of men, and beneath—if they choose—they will find their feet are upon a Rock. The Rock of a faith in the power of Good itself. . . . It is beyond reason. Only feeling can apprehend it. . . . It is only when your soul is utterly still that it can hear God speak—and He speaks not with the tongue of humanity. . . . When the storm breaks, let it rage. . . . In quietness and confidence shall be your strength. In that strength you shall do the work of ten. . . . The confidence of a mighty Purpose working out its mysterious will—this shall bring you through, unhurt of soul—though the storms rage. . . . If you believe that God is

in His heaven, must not all eventually be right with the world? Be not fearful, oh, ye of little faith!"

A soft, elusive breeze that seemed to bring with it the very soul of the words, fell on the listener. Thoughts gathered that were no longer translatable into human speech—but the soul knew them. . . . At last he rose slowly, and came with many pauses down the cliffs through the lingering unearthly beauty. Each radiant day seemed like a gem he might not find again. From ledge to ledge he came, with a warm sense of comfort and healing and strange assurance springing up within him. As he descended, some lines of Scollard's drifted through his mind.

"Come, courage, come, and take me by the hand;

"Gird me with faith; the radiant faith to see

"Beyond the darkness—Immortality.

"Thus may the gulf be spanned!"

Something that transcended words had passed from the heart of the mountain to the heart of the man; ineffable peace welled up in his breast as he came at last through

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the darkening woods, along the paths familiar even in the dusk; a healing touch of balm had been laid on a jagged cut in his heart that had hardly yet ceased to bleed.





SCOTT A. SMITH TAKING A LONG LOOK FROM THOREAU'S SEAT

VII

It was Sunday. Perhaps The Mountain-Lover only fancied it but it seemed to him that everything on the mountain knew what day it was. Down in the world below Sunday might be a hurrying, bustling day, where one turned but from one set of activities to another, but up here in this remoteness he thought that all the flitting birds and chattering squirrels, the velvet blueberries and the scarlet cranberries, the cushiony moss and the rock-ferns and the ruby bunchberries making their violent carpet of flame and green, and every dancing leaf and every shiny needle and brown-scaled cone—all knew and shouted out the Day. A special day. A day of peace.

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Today the Mountain-Lover betook himself early to the heights, for on Sundays the dwellers on the plains would seek the mountain in great numbers and he liked to be far away, and have it for his own day. He decided to spend the night also on the cliffs—as he frequently did—and with sandwiches and chocolate in his pocket and a blanket roll on his back he set forth gladly. A leisurely climb it would be, having the day—and the night—before him, and far out on the Dublin Ridge he meant to go. That was always the loneliest part of the mountain.

For three or four days he had been forced to be in New York on perplexing and intricate business and had come back late the evening before. His tired nerves still jangled with the clamor and rush and tumult and heat and drive of the restless, swarming hive. What delight to come back to his mountain again, and to pass thus high, high, up into the open, into an utterly silent world

of sapphire and emerald and gold! Tranquil, far-spread silence!

He loitered over the Jaffrey Ridge trail with ever fresh delight; past the tawny, swampy, rock-girt meadow, with its fluffy white cottongrass swinging and swaying its snowy, tufted head with every flirting breeze; up broad ledge after broad ledge, with the east and west horizon line of the ridge slipping back as he approached it, until suddenly he topped it and stood upon its crest. Instantly the far northern view lay unrolled before him. Melting in billowing lines to the dim, hazy outline that was Mt. Washington, the mountains flowed silently away in soundless waves of azure and heliotrope till they broke against the sky. A long gaze here—like a deep draught of water to a parched throat—then the Rambler went on down from the crest, to the north, where the slope sank abruptly. He stopped again, drinking in profound breaths of the crystal dustless air, that renewed him like wine. More and more deeply did he breathe it in,

until every fibre of his body seemed newly alive and the crisp buoyancy of the atmosphere seemed to filter through every tissue. All fatigue of mind and body fell away like a cloak. He was a new man.

He came to the Sarcophagus, that mighty boulder perched so casually in its place that it is hard to understand—from the lay of the slopes—just how it could have been borne here; for though it lies in a long depression as far as the main sweep of the Dublin Ridge is concerned, at this particular point the ledges rise to it. What Titanic forces of ice and water in those dim, by-gone ages of the Glacier days, had borne up hither this monster? The Mountain-Lover—who was no geologist—had mused often over the puzzle of it. On the floor of the deep little depression between this point and some cliffs to the west, in inextricable confusion, lay innumerable small rocks, sharp-edged as if quarried, but the only dynamite used had been the irresistible power

of the frost, first cracking, then bursting asunder rock after rock, with clean-cut slashes.

The Mountain-Lover passed on his way up the next small peak and down again and up the next, disdaining today the cairns that silently suggested easier ways around. He wanted the roughness and the climbing and the highest points. Far up here the world once more seemed large enough to move in freely without irritating contact with other rasped souls.

He gained at last the topmost point in the long reach of the Dublin shoulder and sighing with satisfaction, he sank down on the clean bare ground against a rock to let his eyes feast their fill. He could see to all sides save to the southwest where rose the vast bulk of the mountain itself, shutting away that view. His eyes dwelt in profound content on point after point; far below the gay little lakes gleamed with their jewel points of light; white ribbons of roads wound their curving way about the hills, vanishing now

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and then in the woods; tiny villages sent up white spires and suggestions of roofs. The only moving things in sight were the two eagles, soaring high, but their flight, calm as the mountain itself, steady, swift, circling, mounting ever higher in great spirals, and as ever on motionless, widespread pinions, was even strangely restful with its suggestion of effortless, limitless power.

The atmosphere was translucently brilliant, as if poured out like molten gold. And the infinite quiet! The resting watcher seemed to bathe in it as in a waveless ocean of utter tranquillity. His soul rested against it. His mind drifted out on it. . . His eyes dwelt on the everlasting hills. In that sea of stillness his musings trailed away into vague thoughts that did not rise into words. So utterly, marvellously still! What was the quality that made the silence of mountains and of deserts so mysteriously different from other silences? He absently realized that even miles away from any great city, although to the outer ear there may be no

noise of any kind—no noises caused by the needs of humanity—still one is not beyond the physical recognition of the ceaseless, impalpable vibrations that are the basis of sound. Though these may be too broad in wave or too few in number for the ear to receive their impact as sound, they still reach the nerves as sensation, though not consciously registered.

The Mountain-Lover closed his eyes for a moment and he visioned the atmosphere for many miles around a great city as an ocean of thick-crowding currents; currents of vibration not merely of words but of the myriad vibrations that accompany any motion whatever of animal or mechanical life; of every mode of locomotion; of every hammering beat of machinery; even of every footfall. He could see these currents surging to and fro, beating on every brick and stone and wooden thing, flung back by the force of their impact along with a thousand others that they themselves brought into being—crossing, fighting, conflicting, con-

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quering and being conquered; rising into the speed necessary to smite the ear as sound or to hurt it with their piercing sharpness or their mad confusion; sinking again with distance out of the region of pure sound but still storming the body in every pulsating nerve. What wonder that we still feel the hubbub and the turmoil of these fighting currents! Only far, far away from all these, on mountains or prairie or desert do the quivering human nerves cease to feel and to respond to this tumult of vibration to which, though it is never lost, we are mercifully at last no longer attuned. Then come peace—and silence. With them, rest unto the soul.

Out on this sea of tranquillity the soul of the pondering man floated. The Spirit that brooded near seemed to smile upon him as if waiting for the conceptions it was breathing to his inner being to rise through his consciousness and clothe themselves with words.

“Joy it is, son that loves me, to come from the dust and restlessness of the lower world!

There the unceasing business of daily concerns sets the dust of the highway of life awirl and all this fills the lungs and blurs the vision. Ground out of the rasping contacts of life, how all the grit of idle words and pettinesses, the jealousies and bits of malice and cruel slander choke the heart! How the crash of competition deafens the ears! You human beings grow to take these for granted, hardly realizing that you are being slowly stifled with the gross air in which so much of life must be passed, and that you are hearing only the mad din of the commonplace. Scarcely do you even realize that anything has been amiss, until you find yourself away from it all, when something catches you up into the upper realms of the soul where you can see all things clearly and hear the harmonies of celestial chords.

“Just as your body needs the freshness and purity and freedom from material dust, even so your soul needs to mount to sunny heights far distant if it would live and

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breathe and live. . . You need these mountain-tops of your inner being. Here, undistracted, you may look deep into innermost recesses and here you may sort out your ambitions and your aims and your accomplishments, and see them in their true values, unblurred by the world's opinions. Know them as they are; some good, some bad. . . Hard it is for those who know not this Silence to be still enough to hear God speak."

The Mountain-Lover raised his eyes yearningly to the heights. Christ went into "high places" apart, to pray. He also needed this Silence.

Time passed. He did not note it. There came

"The marching clouds
"And the talking sun
"And the high blue afternoon."

Hours slipped by unheeded. Far below the level of awareness the Spirit of the Mountain was bringing to the pondering man untranslatable perceptions. Voiceless music rang to the depths of his soul.

Slowly, deeply as the miracle of sunset approached, there stole across his consciousness sensations thrilling him to the core. He began to feel deep within him the profound throb of the mountain-heart itself; its quiet, beating pulse. The far-rolling hills were undulating with its rhythm, and his own heart was pulsing in unison as if he himself were caught up to the Universal Soul. . . As he listened, awestruck, the throbbing beat gravely strengthened until it became like a mighty organ-note to which the flowing hills responded more and more clearly, with their own distant chorus. Deeper and higher outspread the broad, majestic harmony until the whole universe seemed filled with music of wild, ineffable sweetness.

The man lifted his eyes again unto the heights which lay solitary in the sunset. There, to the vision of his soul, the cliffs gradually seemed alive in their solitude with radiant, shadowy forms ethereal in unspeakable beauty, swaying like thistle-down in the gold of the setting sun. An unearthly,

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pearly light seemed to gather around that joyous, floating throng, made visible from an unseen, enveloping world; a listening, surrounding universe of help and comfort and strength without limit. God.

And this white and shining throng were themselves swelling the song of the hidden world—a life-chorus that rolled and surged up to Heaven itself in mighty chords. Words seemed at last to shape themselves—the words of David, Mountain-Lover and God-Lover.

“Why faint, my soul? Why doubt Jehovah’s aid?

“Thy God the God of Mercy yet shall prove.

“Within His courts thy thanks shall yet be paid,

“Unquestioned be His faithfulness and love.”

The peace of God which passeth all understanding lay upon the mountain and upon the heart of the man.

THE END.

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